

**THE IMPACT OF SIWATI L1 ON THE ACQUISITION OF
ACADEMIC ENGLISH BY TERTIARY STUDENTS IN SWAZILAND**



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CHAPTER 4: A DISCUSSION OF THE SISWATI LANGUAGE, ITS GRAMMAR, SEMANTICS AND RELEVANCE TO THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT IN SWAZILAND	78
4.1 Introduction	78
4.2 Demography of Swaziland	79
4.3 Linguistic classification of siSwati	81
4.4 Linguistic function and status of siSwati.	81
4.5 Dialectal variants of siSwati.....	82
4.6 Switch to English as medium of instruction	85
4.7 The context of English and siSwati in Swaziland	85
4.8 Previous research on L1 influence on L2	92
4.9 The morphological system	94
4.10 The syntactic structure of siSwati	99
4.11 The Pragmatic Domain of siSwati.....	105
4.12 Conclusion	108
CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	109
5.1 Introduction	109
5.2 Research question	110
5.3 Research setting/site.....	110
5.4 Research population/ Sampling	111
5.5 Research design.....	112
5.6 Research method and data-gathering instruments	115
5.7 The General Research Approach and Data gathering instruments.....	115
5.8 Data Analysis	120
5.9 Ethical Considerations/issues.....	122
5.10 Conclusion	124
CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	125
6.1 Introduction	125
6.2 Questionnaire data.....	126
6.3 Extended open-ended written questionnaire data	158
6.4 Analysis of students' texts.....	164
6.5 Conclusion	221
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	223
7.1 Introduction	223
7.2 Conclusion on the findings	223
7.3 Implications of the findings	225
7.4 Recommendations	229

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	5
SUMMARY OF THE STUDY	6
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	8
DECLARATION	10
DEDICATION.....	11
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION - THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING	12
1.1 Background.....	12
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	13
1.3 Rationale for the study	15
1.4. Objectives of the study.....	17
1.5 Research questions	18
1.6 Limitations of the study.....	18
1.7 Brief overview of the thesis structure	19
1.8 Abbreviations and Acronyms	20
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW: LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND SECOND-LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORIES AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE CURRENT STUDY	24
2.1 Introduction	24
2.2 Defining L2 Acquisition	24
2.3 Theories that deal with processes of language acquisition	26
2.4 Theories dealing with acquisition and monitoring	35
2.5 The Input Hypothesis in second language acquisition	40
2.6 Theories dealing with interdependency.....	41
2.7 Socio-cognitive theories	43
2.8 Constraints to second language acquisition.....	44
2.9 Conclusion	51
CHAPTER 3: A DISCUSSION OF THE CONCEPT OF ACADEMIC ENGLISH.....	53
3.1 Introduction	53
3.2 Defining Academic English	53
3.3 Different perspectives on Academic English	55
3.4 Conditions for mastering the meaning system of Academic English	64
3.5 Previous studies on Academic English.....	72
3.6 Conclusion	77

7.5 Future studies.....	231
REFERENCES.....	232

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Chomsky's LAD model of L1 acquisition	33
Figure 2: TABLE 1: SCARCELLA'S LINGUISTIC COMPONENTS OF ACADEMIC ENGLISH	60
Figure 3: Table 2: Number of lecturing staff speaking L1 siSwati and L2 English	69
Figure 4: The number of lecturing staff speaking siSwati L1 and English L2 in Swaziland's tertiary institutions .	70
Figure 5: Map showing the location of Swaziland	80
Figure 6: Dialect areas of Swaziland	84
Figure 7:TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF RESULTS IN SGCSE/IGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND SISWATI L1	89
Figure 8: PASS/FAILURE RATE IN SGCSE/IGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND SISWATI L1	90
Figure 9: PASS/FAILURE RATE IN SGCSE/IGCSE SISWATI OVER A PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS.....	90
Figure 10: Flowchart of the research design for the study.....	113
Figure 11: Distribution of respondents in terms of gender, educational level, area of origin and programme of study	128
Figure 12: Students' self-ratings in siSwati proficiency	130
Figure 13: Frequency of students speaking siSwati on campus	132
Figure 14: Frequency of students speaking siSwati to lecturers	132
Figure 15: Students' self-ratings in English proficiency	134
Figure 16: Manner in which proficiencies were achieved	135
Figure 17: Students' self-ratings of their abilities in the four language skills in English.....	139
Figure 18: Students' self-ratings of their abilities in the four language abilities of siSwati.....	140
Figure 19: Students' self-ratings of their abilities in the four language skills in French	141
Figure 20: Students' self-ratings of their abilities in reading in English, siSwati and French.....	141
Figure 21: Students' self-ratings of their abilities in writing in English, siSwati and French combined	142
Figure 22: Amount of time students spoke English among themselves.....	144
Figure 23: Amount of time English is spoken with lecturers	145
Figure 24: Medium of instruction at preschool.....	146
Figure 25: Medium of instruction at primary school.....	146
Figure 26: Medium of instruction at Secondary/High school.....	147
Figure 27: Medium of instruction at college	147
Figure 28: Frequency of code-mixing with friends/classmates on campus.....	149
Figure 29: Frequency of code-mixing with lecturers	150
Figure 30: Preferred languages in different situations	151
Figure 31: Lecturer rating of student competencies in English in the four language skills	153
Figure 32: Frequency of students' code-mixing with lecturers	154
Figure 33: Lecturers' ratings of students' frequency of code-mixing	154

APPENDIXES follow thesis on p.246

ABSTRACT

Research has pointed to the influence of the first language (L1) in the acquisition of the second (L2). In this study I investigate the interface between siSwati as an L1 and the acquisition of Academic English by students of the tertiary institutions of Swaziland. I examine five theoretical frameworks which are germane to L2 acquisition – error analysis, interdependency, transfer, interlanguage and fossilization. I discuss how these frameworks can help explain the low levels of proficiency in Academic English among learners in tertiary institution in Swaziland. In my research I employ qualitative research methods – questionnaires with both students and lecturers on initial and subsequent encounters with reading and writing both in the L1 (siSwati) and the L2 (English) – as well as quantitative research methods including statistical analyses of demographic and biographic data. In addition, in order to gauge the impact of the L1 on the L2 I analyse written texts of first and final year students at a number of tertiary institutions in Swaziland. Findings reveal that the students' L1 does, to some extent, interfere with their ability to properly acquire Academic English but cannot entirely explain the students' failure to acquire competency or near native proficiency in Academic English. Other militating factors include early educational environments which were not conducive to stimulating bilingualism, poor supply of text resources in both the L1 and the L2, the lack of a culture of reading in either the L1 or L2, the remoteness of English mother-tongue contexts, peripheral normativity practices in the institutions and indeed the emergence and development of a new variety of English in Swaziland. My own assessment criteria were critiqued during the course of this study and suggestions were made as to the validity of some of my assumptions about what constitutes “correct English”. This insight should necessitate a new study on how English competency is assessed in Swaziland and to what extent it is in line with contemporary views of what constitutes Standard English. It is hoped that the findings of this study will inform current debates on language teaching and assessment in tertiary institutions in Swaziland and also highlight areas of concern for academic programmes that focus on developing language and writing skills. Finally, I recommend that it is literacy in the L1 that needs to be addressed at the grass-roots level in order for transfer to the L2 to occur successfully. Ultimately I conclude that efficient acquisition of Academic English can only be achieved when cognitive abilities have been properly developed in the L1.

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

In this study I examine the influence of L1 siSwati on the acquisition of English by tertiary students in Swaziland. The aim is to investigate the barriers to adequate proficiency levels in English, particularly Academic English¹, and to examine the extent to which the students' L1 impacts on their acquisition of the L2. I hope that findings will add a new dimension to the teaching of English in academic institutions and also influence the coordination of appropriate intervention programmes to correct the situation.

I begin by focusing on three themes on which the study is situated: reviewing texts on the actual mechanisms involved in L1 and L2 acquisition; processes involved in L2 acquisition and the viewpoints that suggest how acquisition might be constrained. The overall aim is to situate the study within the global picture of L1 proficiency and L2 learning. I further discuss the concept of Academic English from different perspectives in both general and academic contexts. A treatment of the main linguistic features of Academic English is aimed at establishing the key features of this variety of English that are essential for siSwati L1 speakers to master in order to succeed in academia.

I then discuss the siSwati language: its linguistic classification in relation to other Nguni languages in the sub-Sahara, its variants, and its grammar, semantics and discourse that are susceptible to cross-linguistic transfer. I further situate the teaching and learning of siSwati and Academic English within the context of Swaziland. This is done in order to show how each of the two official languages (siSwati and English) are weighted in the education system of the country.

Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, I analyse the data I collected from four institutions of learning in Swaziland where 351 students and 9 lecturers who speak siSwati as an L1 participated. The analyses of errors of the students' texts reveal that the L1 repertoire of the students has a negative influence on their acquisition of English. However, transfer alone does not explain the difficulty that students experience in trying to master the L2. Other militating factors include early educational environments which are not conducive to

¹ I capitalize 'Academic English' because, in this study, I am referring to a particular variety of English that is distinct.

stimulating bilingualism, a poor supply of text resources in both the L1 and the L2, the lack of a culture of reading, the remoteness of English mother-tongue contexts, peripheral normativity practices in the institutions and indeed the emergence and development of a new variety of English in Swaziland.

While the analyses of students' texts suggest interference from the L1, the fact that a number of sentences that I deemed incorrect were, in fact, considered accurate and appropriate by L1 speakers of English, led me to conclude that accuracy in the students' L2 is still measured according to strict, orthodox grammatical rules. Emphasis in the teaching of English in schools and Academic English in tertiary institutions is placed on dissecting the grammatical rules of the English language, analysing English writing, memorizing vocabulary and assessing our students according to outdated notions of what is, and what is not, correct English. I recommend that the notion of what is correct, and what is not correct, English in the 21st century be investigated not only among the students, but lecturers as well, and that teaching staff need to be aware of the existence of New Englishes and enliven their lessons with reference to these new varieties.

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I also wish to extend my gratitude to the University of Cape Town (UCT) for the UCT International and Refugee students' scholarship.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that **The Impact of SiSwati L1 in the Acquisition of Academic English by Tertiary Students in Swaziland** submitted by me for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Cape Town is my original work and has not been previously submitted in its entirety or in part for assessment purposes to any other university. I further declare that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Author: Phindile Alice Dlamini

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Date

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.....

Date

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, particularly my mother to whom I owe so much gratitude. Although she had to live in abject poverty, she ensured that I received the education I yearned for. Not only that, she also gave me her genetic inheritance of an inquisitive mind and a fighting spirit. Thanks a million *Ludvonga lwaMavuso waNgwane!* It is, however, regrettable that my father did not live long enough to sing his praise names on the graduation of '*liNgisi lakhe.*'

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION - THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

1.1 BACKGROUND

From 1991 to 1998, I taught English language and siSwati at Ka-Boyce High school, a school located in Mbabane, the capital city of Swaziland. While the learners were of mixed groups, my expectations were that since they were in an urban school, they had advantaged backgrounds and would cope well and not struggle with Academic English. That was not the case.

In 2001, I went to teach in a rural school. Generally the expectation was that the learners would be worse in English than those I had encountered in the urban school. While it was true that the learners in the urban school were better in communicative competence in social interactions, in terms of communicative competence in academic situations, the margin was very thin.

In 2003, I began lecturing English language courses at the University of Swaziland. While most of the learners in the Department of English Language and Literature could speak English comfortably, the majority appeared to lack communicative competence in academic situations. What was it that inhibited all these learners I had encountered from acquiring Academic English?

As the title suggests, the aim of this study is to investigate and present a description of the influence siSwati as a first language (L1) exerts on the acquisition of Academic English by students in tertiary institutions in Swaziland. From my experience first as a high school teacher and then as an English lecturer at the University of Swaziland, I was prompted to investigate the barriers to the development of proficiency in Academic English and particularly to examine the impact the L1 has on the acquisition of the second/additional language. My hope was that such a study would add a new dimension and understanding to the teaching and assessment of English in academic institutions and also influence the coordination of appropriate intervention programmes to correct the situation.

The investigation of the gap between tertiary students' L1 in relation to their acquisition of Academic English is a result of a serious challenge that has emerged in, and has projected itself through, the perceived low proficiency levels in Academic English not only in higher education but also in the whole education system of Swaziland. At primary, secondary and high schools,

the majority of Swazi² learners fail English. Those who pass it and get admitted to tertiary institutions are still perceived by lecturing staff as having limited Academic English proficiency as their writing is “infected with errors” (Pongweni, 2012, p. 8) and as such they are underprepared for academic discourse. Students’ academic written and spoken English is considered to be characterized by problems of expression, grammatical errors and colloquial forms that reflect a very strong L1 influence. These are the very same students who obtained a C symbol or better in English Language at high school³, a symbol regarded as a benchmark for proper English usage and a qualification for tertiary education. The current study is, therefore, an attempt to discover and describe how the learners’ L1 influences the acquisition process of Academic English in Swaziland.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Since colonial times, emphasis on Academic English in the education system of Swaziland has been placed on correct standard forms that approximate the norms of the ‘centre’ (Kachru, 1986). English language practitioners, particularly the educators, are urged to provide learners with linguistic tools that will enable them to communicate effectively, efficiently and unambiguously. Despite the fact that language in general is influenced by context, linguistic gatekeepers such as Quirk (1990) suggest that teachers of English should focus on native norms and native-like performance and uphold one common standard. They argue that it is only a common standard that would regulate the use of English in different contexts.

Countries with English as a native language have been regarded as the centre, thus providing the norms of correctness to non-English-speaking countries which often operate as the periphery (Blommaert, 2010). Deviations from the norms of correct English have been frowned upon and described as polluting Standard English (Hudson, 1977, p. x).

According to De Kadt and Mathonsi (n.d., p. 100) many universities have sought to tackle the language problem by making available or prescribing English language development modules of different types for the learners whose English is considered in need of improvement. In Swaziland, efforts to correct non-standard English, and scaffolding done by academic literacy specialists in the Department of Academic Communication Skills (ACS) to all first year students at tertiary institutions are seldom successful. My personal conversations with lecturers in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Swaziland and my

² In this thesis I use the vernacular term *siSwati* for the language and *Swazi* for the people of Swaziland.

³ International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) 2009-2013 statistics

general observations both as a high school teacher and as a university lecturer reveal that students' writing and speech continue to manifest the perceived substandard forms throughout their high school and university education.

Surprisingly, although students' English language at school level is generally endorsed as proper by their teachers and the Examinations Council of Swaziland (ECOS, 2011-2013), employers express concerns at their low levels of proficiency in Academic English projected in the colloquial forms that characterize their discourse (Marope, 2010). The same sentiments are shared by discontented tertiary education lecturers on the crop of students they receive from high schools and even colleges (Dlamini, 2010). The blame, as observed by Platt, Weber and Ho (1984, p.161) is handed down through a hierarchy:

- a) University lecturers blame secondary school teachers for the students' bad English;
- b) Secondary school teachers blame the primary school teachers;
- c) Primary school teachers blame the pre-school teachers;
- d) Pre-school teachers, since they cannot blame the parents because, a local language is spoken at home, blame it on television and the internet.

Explaining the persistent use of poor Academic English by university students raises the question of whether or not such difficulties are directly attributable to the influence of the L1. Focusing specifically on higher education students, I conducted my study in order to determine the impact of the siSwati linguistic structure on the acquisition and development of Academic English proficiency of Swazi students. I try to establish whether or not (and the extent to which) the L1 structure is responsible for the non-acquisition of normative Academic English by these students.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) scholarship has shown that learners need to be prepared for the linguistic realities of employment and citizenship (Cummins, 2000, p. 53). For students whose home language is not English, the lack of English proficiency constrains learning and academic achievement. The acquisition of a second language (L2) requires a certain level of cognitive development in one's mother tongue (MT) as skills used in L1 are transferred to the learners L2 (Cummins, 1984).

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Since the field of L1 interference in second language learning (SLL) has been well served by books and journals (Bhela, 1999; Cummins, 1984, 2000; Edl, Jones & Estell, 2008; Scott & Tucker, 1974; Slama, 2012; Sinha, Banerjee, Sinha & Shastri, 2009, Yoon & Hirvela, 2004), and the siSwati language in its standard form is fairly well studied (Klein, 2006, 2008; Nichols, 2011; Sibanda & Mthembu, 1996; Taljaard, Khumalo & Bosch, 1991; Thwala, 1996, 2006; Ziervogel & Mabuza, 1976), one would wonder why this research is necessary. The motivation for the present work is sixfold.

Firstly, L1 interference issues have remained unresolved in Swaziland both at the theoretical and practical level of policy and practice. In Swaziland, English is a passing subject in the education system of the country. This means that in order for a student to pass the external examinations, the Swaziland Primary Certificate (SPC) (Grade 7), Junior Certificate (JC) (Grade 10) and the Swaziland General Certificate of Secondary Education (Grade 12) s/he should pass six subjects **including English Language**. English Language is also an entry requirement in some institutions of higher learning such as the University of Swaziland (UNISWA), William Pitcher Teachers' College (WPTC) and the Faculty of Health at the South African Nazarene University (SANU). While policy dictates that English Language is a passing subject and an entry requirement into some tertiary institutions (Ministry of Education and Training – MoET, 2011), there is no work to date that has extensively examined the influence of siSwati as L1 on the learning of English (and specifically, English as it is used in academic contexts) both in schools and in tertiary institutions in the country.

Secondly, since the siSwati language was accorded official status equivalent to English⁴, there has been no extensive study conducted to investigate how it influences the learning of Academic English in the country. For many years, English proficiency levels in tertiary institutions of Swaziland have been a cause for concern. In the academic year 2010/2011 members of the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Swaziland (where I am currently a lecturer) in collaboration with school teachers of English in Swaziland attempted to conduct a workshop on the state of English in Swaziland. This was necessitated by the high rate of failure in English in Swaziland and the disappointingly low levels of proficiency among English language majors at the University of Swaziland. It was hoped that the workshop would investigate the problems teachers faced in the pedagogy of English in

⁴ The Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland Act, 2005

schools and assist where they felt there was a need in order to improve the performance of learners in English. The workshop needed funding in order to cater for teachers' transportation, accommodation, food and stationery. Unfortunately, because of financial constraints faced by the department, the workshop did not materialize and the problem (of addressing the high rate of failure) remained virtually unresolved. This situation is the direct reason for the commencement of the current research.

Thirdly, while low proficiency levels are felt in the classrooms, there has not been any research that has included the individual and collective voices of the students (Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins, 1988). This means that the students' voices:

Have (predictably) not been heard and have consequently had minimal influence on the policies and programmes being developed "to meet their needs" (Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins, 1988, p. 3).

Bandora (2009, p. 25) refers to the weak position Swaziland's learners find themselves operating in, and argues that their inability to participate in policies that affect their futures impacts on their lack of capacity to develop professionally.

Fourthly, although in Swaziland school curriculum programmes have continued to change⁵ these changes remained notably uninformed on research that has been conducted on issues related to English teaching in the country and globally. In this study, therefore, I attempt to provide both a theoretical and practical context for understanding the nature of the issues and strategies for reversing the current trend.

A fifth reason concerns articles on Swazi colloquial English. Small scale studies by Arua (1998), Kamwangamalu and Chisanga (1996), Kamwangamalu and Moyo (2003) and De Koning (2009) on the English used in Swaziland have identified colloquial forms apparent in the writings of university students and journalists. These are described as a variety of English that the authors refer to as Swazi Colloquial English. While these pioneering studies contain valuable material, they are limited in that they do not provide a detailed description of the factors influencing or contributing this 'variety' or how it is in line with colloquial 'Englishes' globally. Studies that have been conducted on learners' use of English in Swaziland lack extensive research that addresses the effect of the learners' L1 on the acquisition of Academic

⁵ From, for example, General Certificate Examination Ordinary Level (GCE O'Level), International General Certificate of Secondary Education, Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education (HIGCSE) to Swaziland General Certificate of Secondary Education

English. My inspiration basically comes from the works cited above as well as the field of new Englishes in Sociolinguistics (Buthelezi, 1995; De Klerk, 2003a; Gough, 1996; Makalela, 2004; McCormick, 1995, 2002a; Mesthrie, 1992, 1996, 1997, 2006; Platt, Weber & Ho, 1984; Watermeyer, 1993).

Finally, a number of studies (Bhela, 1999; McAllister, Flege & Piske, 2002; Paradis & Navarro, 2003; Ramirez, Chen, Geva & Kiefer, 2010; Scott & Tucker, 1974; Sinha et al., 2009) on L1 interference on L2 learning and acquisition have led to findings for second language acquisition in general. These include studies where the L1 illustrative material is French, Ukrainian, Arabic, Spanish, Japanese, and Swedish. There have not yet been studies that relate these findings to an African language, particularly studies that have examined the impact of siSwati on the acquisition and development of English as L2. In this study, therefore, I set out to address the dearth of siSwati examples in the existing SLA knowledge base and to add to the new developments in SLA research.

It is hoped that this study will provide more empirical evidence to understand the origins of students' poor performance in Academic English and will further increase the knowledge base of linguists and sociolinguists who inform academic bridging programmes on how best to improve English language intervention programmes among tertiary students.

I am conscious, though, of the fact that the findings of this study may not necessarily provide an either-or outcome as there could be a complex interplay of factors resulting in perceptions that students' Academic English is inadequate and that conservative notions of what is correct and incorrect English might be an overused trope in Swaziland educational circles and one that also requires further research.

1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 MAIN OBJECTIVE

To investigate how having siSwati as an L1 affects students' acquisition of Academic English.

1.4.2 SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

- a) To explore students' academic writing practices at tertiary institutions in Swaziland in order to determine their Academic English proficiency levels;
- b) To examine the structure of students' L1 and point out areas of difference and congruity with Academic English or any other languages in their repertoire;

- c) To discuss the impact of the linguistic and extra linguistic structures of siSwati in the acquisition of Academic English;
- d) To establish the nature of support or intervention strategies that Academic English learners require in order to succeed academically;
- e) To critically reflect on my own notions of what is correct and incorrect English.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to address the above, in the current study I pursue the following overarching research question: How does having siSwati as a first language impact on the acquisition of Academic English by Swazi students at tertiary level?

1.5.1 SUBSIDIARY QUESTIONS

- a) To what extent does the structure of students' first language influence the acquisition of Academic English?
- b) If it does, is the nature and extent of this influence consistent for all students?
- c) What background do students have in learning linguistic descriptions of their L1 (i.e. meta-language description)?
- d) What is the students' knowledge of the syntactic structure of L1 which causes difficulty in L2?
- e) What intervention strategies can educators employ to influence students' academic discourse?

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited in that the respondents in the current study were only nine (9) lecturers and three hundred and fifty one (351) first and final year undergraduate students at the Southern Africa Nazarene University, the Swaziland College of Technology (SCOT), Ngwane Teachers' College and the William Pitcher Teachers' College. Although other lecturers and institutions of higher learning in Swaziland such as the University of Swaziland, Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, Swaziland College of Theology, and the Good Shepherd Nursing College may have similar experiences with the low English proficiency levels of their students, because of the exigencies of time and the specific objectives of the study, it was not expedient to examine all of them. Proficiency levels at these four institutions are representative of low proficiency levels at tertiary institutions generally: further studies can explore the link between

the results and low English levels in other domains such as commerce and journalism. This study examined how having siSwati as a first language influenced the acquisition of Academic English at tertiary level with the hope that the research would serve as groundwork for the coordination of appropriate intervention programmes in the education system of Swaziland.

1.7 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS STRUCTURE

The study is divided into seven chapters, summaries of which I provide below.

Chapter 1

In this chapter I introduce the study and outline the statement of the problem, rationale, objectives, the research question and the limitations of the study. This is followed by Chapters 2, 3 and 4 which lay the theoretical foundations of the study and review the literature related to it.

Chapter 2

In Chapter 2 the theories advanced for L1 and SLA, the processes involved in second language acquisition and the constraints that inhibit acquisition are discussed. In this chapter, I also examine the relevance of these theories to the study.

Chapter 3

Using the frameworks of Thurston and Candlin (1998), Corson (1997), and Scarcella (2003), in Chapter 3 I provide an overview of the features of Academic English that would facilitate the proficiency that both language educators and students need to be cognizant of. In this chapter I examine how vocabulary and grammar can be developed to augment conceptual development and proficiency in different academic meaning discourses and discursive practices. I also examine the practices and communicative competences of students in academic situations in institutions of higher learning in Africa and abroad. I do this in order to situate the subjects of the current study in the global picture of Academic English proficiency.

Chapter 4

In this chapter I discuss the siSwati language alongside the English language to show how the two languages are weighted in the education system of Swaziland. It is in this chapter that I also discuss the nature and the linguistic features of SiSwati that are prone to transfer in the second language learning process.

Chapter 5

Here I outline the methodology and the research instruments I have used in order to obtain answers to the research question guiding the study. These include the questionnaire, the structured interviews and the students' essays.

Chapter 6

In this chapter I present the findings of the study and I integrate them with the literature reviewed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. It is in the findings in this chapter that respondents' encounters with both L1 and L2 are demonstrated.

Chapter 7

This is the last chapter, where I consolidate the conclusions of the previous chapters and conclude the study. I also look at wider implications arising from this study and make recommendations for future research.

1.8 ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

1.8.1 LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS USED IN DISCUSSION

ACS	Academic Communication Skills
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
BSAE	Black South African English
CA	Contrastive Analysis
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language proficiency
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECOS	Examinations Council of Swaziland
ESL	English as a Second Language
GCE O' LEVEL	General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
JC	Junior Certificate

L1	First language
L2	Second language
LoL/T	Language of Learning and Teaching
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
SANU	Southern Africa Nazarene University
SBIS	Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Service
SCE	Swazi Colloquial English
SCOT	Swaziland College of Technology
SGCSE	Swaziland General Certificate of Secondary Education
SI	Supplemental Instruction
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLL	Second Language Learning
SPC	Swaziland Primary Certificate
STA	Swaziland Television Authority
UNISWA	University of Swaziland
WE	World English
WPTC	William Pitcher Teachers' College

1.8.2 ABBREVIATIONS USED IN GLOSSING IN CHAPTER 6

1	First person
2	Second person
3	Third person
ABS-PRON	Absolute pronoun
ADJ	Adjective
ADV	Adverb
ANT	Anterior
APPL	Applied
ASS	Associative
AUX	Auxiliary

AUX.PST	Auxiliary verb past tense
BE	'be' verb
Bec.	become
BEN	Benefactive
CAUS	Causative
COND	Conditional
CONJ	Conjunctive
COP	Copulative
CPL	Completive aspect
DEM	Demonstrative
DISJ	Disjunction
DO	Direct object
ENUM	Enumerative
FAR.PST	Far Past
FUT	Future
FV	Final vowel
HORT	Hortative
INF	Infinitive
INS	Instrumental
IO	Indirect object
LOC	Locative
NEG	Negative, negation
NP	Noun phrase
NUM	Numeral
O	Object
Ø	Zero prefix (for NP1a and 2b)
OM	Object marker
PART	Participial
PASS	Passive
PERF	Perfective aspect
PERS	Persistive
PL	Plural

POSS	Possessive
POT	Potential
PRS	Present tense
PRO	Pronoun
PST	Past tense
PST NARR	Past narrative
PST.CONJ	Past conjunctive
QUAL	Qualificative
QUANT	Quantitative
REFL	Reflexive
REL	Relative
REM.PST	Remote past
S	Subject
SG	Singular
SM	Subject marker
STAB	Stabilizer
SBJV	Subjunctive
V	Verb
	Numerals stand for the traditional numbering of the basic prefixes given to noun classes in siSwati.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW: LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND SECOND-LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORIES AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE CURRENT STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1, I introduced the study and discussed the statement of the problem. I also presented the rationale, objectives and the limitations of the study. It is in Chapter 1 that the research question guiding the study was posed. In this chapter, I set the scene for the rest of the research. To do this, I explain L2 acquisition and discuss the theories and processes that scholars have offered as explanations for how the acquisition of L2s occurs. This is done in order to understand how learners succeed in acquiring L2s and explain how and why L2 acquisition fails to occur in some educational contexts. I pay particular attention to works that deal with the effect of the L1 on the L2. Although the focus of this chapter is L2 acquisition, I begin with a consideration of how children acquire their L1s. This is drawn in as L1 acquisition has implications for the acquisition of an L2.

In Chapter 2, I focus on three themes on which the study is situated. I begin by reviewing texts on the actual mechanisms involved in L1 and L2 acquisition. I then proceed to review some processes involved in L2 acquisition and close with a section that discusses viewpoints that suggest how acquisition might be constrained. The overall aim is to situate the study within the global picture of L1 proficiency and L2 learning. I lay groundwork for, and offer a preliminary attempt at, constructing a systematic account of the perceived low proficiency levels in Academic English in higher education in Swaziland.

2.2 DEFINING L2 ACQUISITION

L2 acquisition is defined as a research area that examines how learners learn languages other than their L1. According to Krashen (1987, p. 1), the acquisition of an L2 occurs when the L2 is used for what it was designed for: communication. Research into L2 acquisition focusses on what learners learn and what they do not learn of the L2. Gass and Selinker (1994, 2008) argue that L2 acquisition research examines how learners create a new language system with only restricted contact to an L2. Its focus is mainly on what is learnt and what is not learnt of the L2.

It is the study of why most second language learners do not achieve the same degree of proficiency in a second language as they do in a native language; ... [and] why only some learners appear to achieve native-like proficiency in more than one language (Gass & Selinker, 1994, p. 1).

VanPatten and Benati (2010, p. 2), who share the same sentiments, view the field of L2 acquisition as:

The field [that] addresses the fundamental questions of how learners come to internalize the linguistic system of another language and how they make use of that linguistic system during comprehension and speech production.

L2 acquisition centres more on the learning processes of learners than on the teaching of instructors (VanPatten & Benati, 2010). From the definitions above it appears that L2 acquisition is a cognitive process and as such examines the cognition methods employed by learners as they become linguistically acculturated.

Chomsky (1965), Gass (2013), Krashen (1982, 1985, and 1987), and Littlewood (1984) distinguish between language acquisition and language learning. Language acquisition, on the one hand, refers to a subconscious process whereby one intuitively ‘picks’ up a language (Krashen, 1982) from the immediate environment and uses it to express one’s communicative needs (Gass & Selinker, 1994). Littlewood (1984, p. 90) refers to this kind of ‘learning’ as subconscious acquisition. L1s are those that are acquired subconsciously from birth from the immediate environment and every child is predisposed to acquiring any language (Chomsky, 1965).

Language learning, on the other hand, is a deliberate effort, a conscious process for internalizing a language. Learning a language means “knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them” (Krashen, 1982, p. 10). This means that learning a language is explicit while acquisition is implicit.

Languages that are learnt through formal instruction in formal school settings are referred to as L2s and foreign languages. However, Littlewood (1984, p. 91) believes that the process of language learning can be both conscious and unconscious. He argues that learners can make conscious efforts to learn a language. According to him progress in learning a language ensues as a result of unprompted subconscious mechanisms that are activated when the learners are involved in communication with the L2. This then means that L2s can be learned or acquired ‘naturally’ outside the classroom.

SiSwati is the L1 of most of the students in the school system and tertiary institutions in Swaziland, and English is their L2. In this study, I examine how the tertiary students' L1, siSwati, could be an inhibitor (or a facilitator) in their creation and internalization of the Academic English linguistic system.

2.3 THEORIES THAT DEAL WITH PROCESSES OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

The ways in which languages are acquired and learned have been the subject of research for many disciplines, including biology, psychology, neuroscience, philosophy, linguistics, sociolinguistics, sociology and anthropology (Atkinson, 2011; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). The theorists in these disciplines explain language acquisition according to their different fields, building on each other's knowledge base and also contesting certain assumptions. Below I discuss various different perspectives that attempt to explain the processes of language acquisition. Since L2 acquisition has its origins in L1 acquisition, the research on L1 acquisition will serve as a backdrop on which to base the language-learning mechanisms involved in the acquisition of L2s, but it is important to note that there are significantly more theories of L2 acquisition than L1 acquisition.

2.3.1 LANGUAGE AS VERBAL BEHAVIOUR

Behaviourism views language as a particular learned behaviour: a set of patterns or habits. Learning a language entails adopting the patterns of a particular behaviour which is the linguistic system and the development of this new linguistic system is influenced by responses to environmental stimuli. According to behaviourists, the learning of a language involves children in forming habits by way of imitating the sounds and language patterns they hear in their immediate environments. The habits children eventually form are a consequence of the reinforcement they receive from the environment. As they practise the sounds and the patterns of the language at their disposal and receive encouragement (reinforcement) from their immediate environment, they end up forming habits of the correct language use (Lightbown & Spada, 1993).

When a child is born into a linguistic community, it feels the desire to engage in conversation with that community (Chambers, 2009, p. 165). This feeling stimulates the need to imitate the sounds and patterns in the environment, and this need is met when caretakers make utterances that the child imitates. According to Skinner (1957), the child's imitations (utterances) are reinforced positively if they resemble those of the caretaker and the positive reinforcers include pleasant experiences such as rewards or praise. However, if the child's imitations do not

resemble those of his or her caretaker they are given negative feedback in order to encourage the formation of correct linguistic habits which are positively rewarded. These rewards and feedback help acculturate the novice learner into the world of a new linguistic behaviour, and are used until the novice learner conforms to the norms of this new linguistic culture (Littlewood, 1984).

According to Skinner (1957), language originates from a physical need to speak and is a means to a physical end and the parents' provision of reinforcement is a vital part of the process. Through his research on L1 acquisition, Skinner (1957) hoped to improve efficiency in language teaching and because he regarded language learning as habit-formation, he studied observable behaviours in language learners.

In SLA, behaviourism found support in the teaching methods that aimed at instilling new habits and linguistic patterns in L2 learners. Instructors sought areas of difficulty for L2 learners and tailored their teaching material and methods towards them. According to this perspective, errors were a significant sign of failure or non-learning and as such they had to be corrected immediately (Bell, 1981). Reinforcement came in the form of input which was obtained from controlled, formal instruction and in the form of rewards for learners who had responded correctly. In this way imitations or drills by learners, either written or oral were employed until the L2 habits were firmly established. The contrastive and errors analyses methods between foreign and native languages were thus carried out to facilitate the learning of the target language (Bell, 1981; Gass & Selinker 1994; Gass, 2013) and gave rise to the Contrastive and Error analyses Hypotheses discussed below.

RELEVANCE OF BEHAVIOURIST THEORY TO THIS STUDY

While I acknowledge the flaws of the behaviourist perspective, in the context of L2 acquisition of Academic English by siSwati speakers, the behaviourist theory would explain how L2 learners, feeling the deprivation of not being able to communicate proficiently in Academic English, would be encouraged to mimic their lecturers' English usage and other inputs by a system of positive rewards. Their language skills in the L2 would be reinforced by lecturers through the medium of instruction in lectures, seminars and tutorials. As students start to imitate lecturers, and are exposed to other inputs such as language laboratories and written texts, their linguistic behaviour is positively reinforced through favourable grades if their language matches standard academic discourse in English, and negatively if it does not. Learners would, therefore, imitate the linguistic behaviours or the input of their instructors and

consequently speak and write better English. The behaviourist perspective would thus help explain not only how learners suppress and change their L1 habits but also how L1 acquired behaviours influence the acquisition of the L2.

2.3.2 THE CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE

Contrastive Analysis is defined as:

A way of comparing languages in order to determine potential errors for the ultimate purpose of isolating what needs to be learned and what does not need to be learned in a second language situation. ... one does a structure by structure comparison of the phonological, morphological, syntactic and even the cultural systems of two languages for the purpose of discovering similarities and differences. The ultimate goal is to predict areas that will be either easy or difficult for learners (Gass & Selinker, 1994, p. 59-60).

With its roots deeply entrenched in behaviourism, the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis assumes that L2 learners start off with the habits they formed in the L1 and transfer them to the L2 learning situation. These habits interfere with the new ones that are required for the L2 (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 34). This transfer is assumed to be the major source of difficulty or ease in learning how the L2 is structured (Gass, 2013, p. 86).

According to the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, it is the similarity between the language structures at the learner's disposal that will enable the learner to acquire the target language with ease, but differences will pose difficulties. The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis presents two polar views: a strong (a priori or predictive) and a weak (a posteriori or explanatory) one (Bell, 1981; Gass, 2013; Littlewood, 1984; Mlambo, 2002).

In the strong claim, Contrastive Analysis acknowledges that while a learner is trying to acquire the linguistic habits of an L2, the habits of his/her L1 interfere with acquiring those of the L2. The proponents of this theory postulate that the best way to teach/learn a language is to compare and contrast the two languages at a learner's disposal, isolating areas of incongruity which serve as the predictors of difficulties learners will encounter in learning a particular L2. This means that the areas of contrast that will emerge from the analysis will predict the errors that learners will be susceptible to committing in the L2 (Bell, 1981, p. 182). The L1 structures that will be different from the L2 will be difficult for the learners because when transferred they will not function satisfactorily in the foreign language. This will ultimately require that they are changed (Gass, 2013, p. 86). Areas of congruity will, however, be easy for the learners to learn and master as they will be easily transferred and may function satisfactorily in the L2. The contrast between the two languages will in turn assist the language instructor to tailor

teaching strategies and courses that will enable the learners to practise errors away before they emerge and get established as habits (Bell, 1981, p. 182; Littlewood, 1984, p. 18).

According to the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis errors learners make indicate differences in the languages at the learners' disposal and the differences have to be learnt.

In the weak claim, the predictive value of Contrastive Analysis is not all-embracing. While proponents of the weak claim acknowledge the influence of the L1 on L2 acquisition, they insist that it is not the only factor responsible for learner errors. As Littlewood (1984, p. 22) argues:

If learners are actively constructing a system for the second language, we would not expect all their incorrect notions about it to be simply a result of transferring rules from their first language. We would expect many of their incorrect notions to be explicable by direct reference to the target language itself.

This means that while the weaker claim does not accept the predictive value of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, it is of the view that errors come from both cross-linguistic transfer and other factors that are not cross-linguistic but interlingual (Bell, 1981, p. 182).

The weaker claim has as its starting point the analysis of the learners' recurring errors and then attempts to give an account for those errors identified on the basis of the learners' L1 and L2s (Gass, 2013).

The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis has found minimal empirical support because:

Language came to be seen not as a set of automatic habits but a set of structured rules. These rules are learned not by imitation, but by actively formulating them on the basis of innate principles as well as on the basis of exposure to the language being learned (Gass & Selinker, 1994, p. 61).

Furthermore, according to Bell (1981, p. 182) and Scott and Tucker (1974, p. 70), no two languages have been described so well that they permit a complete comparison between them. In addition to that, not all L2 learning errors can be traced back to the L1. Studies also showed that some errors that occurred were not predicted by contrastive analysis and some that were predicted did not occur (Gass, 2013, p. 87).

A study by Zobl (1980), for example, found that errors were not bi-directional. For instance, English-speaking learners of French negatively transferred the English post-verbal pronoun placement and produced ungrammatical utterances, yet French-speaking learners of English

did not make the same error even though both languages have preverbal object pronouns. He saw this as an idiosyncratic instance of learning difficulty.

In addition, not all areas of similarity between the L1 and the L2 lead to positive transfer. A study by Odlin (1989) reported that although Spanish has a copula verb similar to English 'be' in sentences like, 'That's very simple', Spanish learners of English as an L2 omit the copula in early stages of acquisition. They thus render structures like, 'That very simple'. This then suggests that some L2 learners' errors cannot be attributed to contrasting properties between learners' L1 and L2.

According to Corder (1981), learners' errors are proof of the development of an interlanguage, and as such they cannot be solely attributed to L1 transfer.

It has been argued that the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis is flawed because it fails to take into account that some L2 errors are caused by poor teaching methods and not interference, and because it ignores the fact that some linguistic features are easier to learn when the L2 is **different** from the L1. It also is argued that CA is more applicable at the phonological level and that it does not make a distinction between competence and performance errors (Mlambo (2002, p. 24-25).

Gass (2013) echoes Mlambo (2002) adding that not only did some unpredicted (by CA) errors occur, but those that had been predicted did **not** in fact transpire. In other words, learners made errors that had nothing to do with their L1.

The fact that language was later viewed as a set of structured rules (Chomsky, 1965) instead of habits and that learning was not imitation but active rule formation ultimately led to the demise of the contrastive analysis hypothesis and its behavioural theoretical underpinnings (Gass, 2013, p. 87).

2.3.3 THE ERROR ANALYSIS HYPOTHESIS

Error analysis was an attempt to validate the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Selinker, 1992). Gass and Selinker (1994, p. 67) and Gass (2013, p. 99) define error analysis as a type of linguistic analysis that focusses on the errors⁶ learners make in an L2 situation. In error

⁶ Gass (2013, p. 91) distinguishes between an error and a mistake. A mistake is akin to a slip of the tongue; it is generally a one-time only event. It can be easily recognized and corrected by a speaker/writer. An error is systematic and likely to occur repeatedly. It is unlikely to be recognized by the speaker/writer as an error. It becomes a grammar in a learner's interlanguage system.

analysis, the errors learners make in the L2 learning situation are compared with the form of the L2. According to Gass (2013, p. 91), while in the weaker claim of contrastive analysis, comparison is made with the L1, in error analysis the comparison of the errors learners make is made with both the L1 and L2 forms themselves. The principal focus of error analysis is the performance errors of the learners.

The error analysis perspective views errors as red flags providing a window into a system (Gass & Selinker, 1994, p. 66). They demonstrate the state of a learner's knowledge of the L2 (Corder, 1981, p. 5; Gass & Selinker, 1994, p. 66; Gass, 2013, p. 91) and as such they should not be considered as products of imperfect learning. To Gass (2013, p. 91), L2 learner errors do not reflect faulty imitation as behaviourists believed but:

Rather, they are to be viewed as indications of a learner's attempt to figure out some system – in other words, to impose regularity on the language the learner is exposed to. As such, they are evidence of an underlying rule-governed system.

Corder (1981, p. 1) believes that pedagogically, before instructors find a systematic means to eradicate errors, a sound understanding of the nature of error is essential. Errors could result from teaching methodologies, transfer and other factors. It is thus critical that before the tools to eradicate them are devised, a basic understanding of their nature is established.

The identification of errors in teaching and learning an L2 found support with Baker (2005). She viewed errors as an important source of information about L2 acquisition. To her, identifying errors grant L2 learners autonomy in determining their own learning strategies in accordance with their L1. It also provides instructors an understanding of how to handle areas of difficulty for the learner in acquiring the target language.

Error analysis, however, falls short in that it does not recognize the full, but only a partial, picture of what a learner produces of the L2 (Gass, 2013, p. 98). Since its focus is on performance data, it does not know what lies beneath the learner's competence in the L2. As Gass (2013, p. 98) concludes "one cannot hope to appreciate the complexity of the learning situation by studying one limited part of it."

THE RELEVANCE OF THE CONTRASTIVE AND ERROR ANALYSES HYPOTHESES TO THE STUDY

While I accept the validity of the criticisms levelled against the Contrastive and Error Analyses Hypotheses, I also acknowledge the fact that an analysis of the congruity between two languages can suggest areas learners may find difficult in the L2. Although it may not be wise to devise strategies before the areas of difficulty are confirmed, Contrastive Analysis may guide

instructors on areas in their instruction that would need emphasis. In this study I also acknowledge that cross-linguistic transfer is one of the many influences at work in L2 learning. Error analysis will, therefore, be of value in the explanation of some of the errors in the respondents' L2. I concur with Baker (2005) who argues that the analysis of errors in an L2 learning situation may allow learners independence to devise their own L2 learning strategies which will be in harmony with their L1. Through analysing students' errors, instructors too will be in a better position to understand how to handle the challenges and areas of difficulty the learners encounter in acquiring the target language. This will in turn provide them with insights into the learning process (Bell, 1981, p. 182).

2.3.4 INNATENESS AND LANGUAGE AS UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR (UG)

Chomsky (1965) critiques Skinner's (1957) stimulus-response view and maintains that an analysis of the speech of children shows that children do not repeat or imitate everything they hear around them. In his notion of creativity, Chomsky (1965) argues that human language is not predictable from stimulus. People understand and can generate an infinite number of sentences they have never heard before without being controlled by precise stimuli. To him human language is stimulus-free and not stimulus bound (Cook & Newson, 1996, p. 77).

Furthermore, from Chomsky's (1965) Language Acquisition Device model it is evident that language acquisition is not about behaviour: behaviour does not matter. It is also not about what children say, but it is what children know from the linguistic input around them. Therefore, according to Chomskyan (1965) Universal Grammar, the Skinnerian theory is suspect and cannot account for language acquisition. The inadequacies of the behaviourist view are echoed by Gass and Selinker (1994, p. 62) when they say:

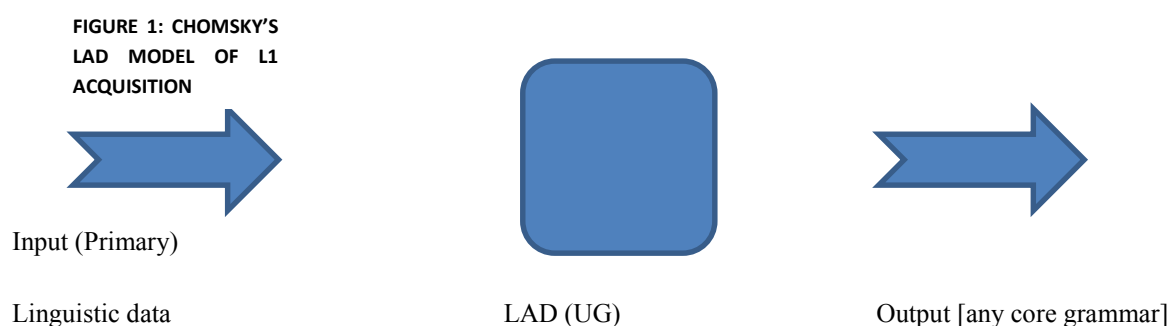
The assumption ... that the correct modeling (perhaps coupled with negative reinforcement ...) is sufficient to perfect a child's [linguistic behavior is wrong]. ... Children do not just soak in what goes on around them, but are actively trying to make sense of the language they are exposed to. They *construct* grammars. In so doing they make generalizations, they test those generalizations or hypotheses, they alter or reformulate them when necessary or at times abandon them in favour of some other generalization.

The nativist perspective proposed by Chomsky (1957, 1965) explains acquisition by positing that all human beings have a genetic disposition to acquire language competence. Children are biologically encoded or wired for language. They are born with a language acquisition device: a black box. Within the language acquisition device is an innate knowledge which is a pre-

programmed universal grammar that permits all children to acquire the language of their community during a critical period of their development (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 35). This innate talent is likened to a template that comprises the principles that are universal to all human languages and enables children to discover for themselves the underlying rules of a language system on the basis of the samples of a natural language they are exposed to (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 15). This knowledge of universal language provides every child with the innate ability to process linguistic rules since it:

Provides a sensory system for the preliminary analysis of linguistic data and a schematism that determines narrowly a certain class of grammar (Chomsky, 1975, p. 12).

When the child is exposed to linguistic data around him or her (the input), the distiller or the processor (within the black box) filters it and the child produces a generative grammar of the community language where s/he is socialized. Cook and Newson (1996, p. 80) summarize Chomsky's theory in the following diagram.



According to the model above, a Swazi child, for instance, born in an English-speaking community would hear sentences with a subject-verb-object (SVO) order (raw linguistic data/input) and would select the word order setting accordingly in the language acquisition device and would output linguistic units (the core grammar) that approximates English.

Within Chomsky's framework, it is exposure to language that triggers the acquisition process, and the innate biological endowment makes learning possible. This means that without the exposure, the internal mechanism which enables a child to construct a grammar from the limited data available would not be possible.

Input data is limited in that it is marred by performance features such as false starts, slips of the tongue, fragments, hesitations and ungrammaticality resulting from these and other pressures inherent in real-time oral communication (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 228; Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 15). Furthermore:

It does not usually contain ‘negative evidence’; information from which the learner could work out what is not possible in a given language. Blatant negative evidence is not available because parents and caretakers, as expected, react to the truth value, not the form of children’s utterances, and rarely correct ungrammatical speech (Laser-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 228).

So, according to Chomsky (1981, p. 234), the goal of universal grammar is to explain the quick and uniform development of language despite limited and often degenerate experience.

Chomsky (1965, 1980, and 1986) argues that an L1 is learned instinctively and it develops in a predictable path regardless of the nature or quality of linguistic input. Humans are born equipped with certain aspects of language (Maybin & Swann, 2010, p. 218) which are activated by maturation. In other words, as a child grows from infancy (initial zero state) to an adult native speaker (final state) so does the language instinct with which humans are endowed. At birth a child knows no language, but by the time he/she reaches adulthood, the ‘child’ has developed full competence of the community language.

For the acquisition of L1, Chomsky’s Universal Grammar Theory foresees that children’s hypotheses (about the input data) depend on the structure of the language (Chomsky, 1975, p. 32). In L2 acquisition as Flynn and O’Neil (1988) argue, it can be assumed that if the principles of universal grammar can explain how L1s are acquired it may also regulate the acquisition of L2s.

However, while acceptable and giving plausible explanation to the acquisition of competence in the L1, Chomsky’s model does not account for the development of discourse competence. According to Chomsky, a child constructs language competence by using the language acquisition device operating on the information or input provided by the environment. The language acquisition device needs support which the child obtains by engaging in social interactions with the immediate environment in order to attain the complexities of adult grammars (Gass, 2013, p. 161). This system will also aid the development of the child’s discourse competence and variability.

According to Gregg (1990) variation is a performance phenomenon. Chomsky’s Universal Grammar model ignores variability as it does not feature in the learner’s underlying competence. In his socio-cognitive approach to SLA, Atkinson (2002) argues that placing learners in situations where the language is necessary for social action is the best way to

promote language acquisition. Following Chomsky's model of competence, it appears that learners cannot cope socially in a situation where language is a tool for social action such as exchanging a greeting, asking the teacher if s/he could hand in an assignment later in the day, or reporting that s/he was not feeling well. Greetings in particular play a very important social role in any African culture (Corum, n.d., p. 3.1) as they are a sign of showing warmth or friendliness. They are not only an expression of interest and an act of noticing the other person, but a means of demonstrating and acquiring politeness in both the L1 and the L2 (Scarcella & Brunak, 1981, p. 62)

In addition, Chomsky's model does not explain what goes on in the processor once the data has entered it. He uses, in a rather facile way, the 'whisky and barley analogy', suggesting that we can deduce the process through which one is transformed into the other, but what actually happens in the distillery remains a puzzle to date (Atkinson, 2011b).

RELEVANCE OF UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR TO THIS STUDY

From what Chomsky says, it is evident that language acquisition is a cognitive process. In examining the influence siSwati may have on the acquisition of Academic English, I need to refer to cognition – the mental representation of the L2 on the basis of deficient input from the environment. Chomsky's Innateness Theory, therefore lays the groundwork for what happens in a learner's cognition as s/he tries to master another language. As Atkinson (2011a, p. 1) argues, language acquisition resides mostly, if not only, in the mind, and since all learners are capable of language acquisition, they all develop certain cognitive capacities to use language.

Chomsky's framework allows me to establish the extent to which respondents in this research had reached steady states in terms of L1 development and cognitive development at the time when they were exposed to L2 acquisition and whether that in turn aids or inhibits their success in L2 acquisition. My analysis does bear in mind, however, that Chomsky's model of language acquisition, while explaining what learners actually know about their L2, cannot tell us how they "happen to use it in any given situation" (Lightbown and Spada, 2006, p. 36).

2.4 THEORIES DEALING WITH ACQUISITION AND MONITORING

In his model of SLA, Krashen (1982, 1987), outlines three other main hypotheses:

- i) The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis;
- ii) The Monitor Hypothesis;
- iii) The Affective Filter Hypothesis.

2.4.1 THE ACQUISITION-LEARNING HYPOTHESIS

In the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis Krashen (1982) asserts that learners use two independent systems in internalizing knowledge of a new language: the acquired system and the learned system. The acquired system is a product of a subconscious effort by which learners pick up a linguistic behaviour (Krashen, 1982, 1987) and is indistinguishable from the process children undergo when they acquire an L1. It requires a meaningful but natural interaction in the L2 where the focus is on communication rather than the form of the language. In Krashen's words (1987, p. 10):

We are generally not consciously aware of the rules of the language we have acquired. Instead, we have a "feel" for correctness. Grammatical sentences "sound" right or "feel" right, and errors feel wrong, even if we do not consciously know what rule was violated.

Krashen's words above echo Chomsky's (1965) poverty-of-stimulus claims that language acquirers pick up linguistic habits from the environment without being taught by anyone.

According to Krashen (1987), the learnt system is a result of formal instruction and it is a conscious effort which results in a conscious knowledge about the language such as the knowledge of the rules of grammar: being cognizant of them and being able to talk about them.

In Krashen's view, although language development in a learner is either acquired or learnt, learners use the language developed in either of the ways for different purposes. The knowledge that is acquired is internalized and used for producing language, generating utterances and the knowledge that is learnt edits the acquired system (Gass, 2013, p.129), assisting the learner to screen the acquired knowledge for correctness at the performance stage (Conteh-Morgan, 2002). This screening constitutes Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis.

2.4.2 THE MONITOR HYPOTHESIS

In the Monitor Hypothesis Krashen (1982, 1987) provides an explanation for the relationship between the acquired system (acquisition) and the learnt system (learning) and how learning influences acquisition. The Monitor Hypothesis postulates that everyone has a monitor that screens one language and tells them when a linguistic performance is good or bad (Krashen, 1982). It asserts that the acquisition system initiates utterances in speech and is responsible for fluency in speech or writing. The learning system monitors or edits the utterances and induces changes or alters the output of the acquired system (Gass, 2013, p. 130) either before or after an individual speaks or writes. To give credit to the behaviourists, this suggests that acquisition stimulates the utterances which are reinforced at the surface structure. At the production stage, the monitor screens the acquired knowledge by planning, editing and correcting mistakes.

The ability to monitor utterances is determined by three factors. Firstly, a second language learner has to have enough time because “it takes real processing time to remember and apply conscious rules” (Krashen, 1987, p. 89). Learners need ample time to consciously think about, and further use, the rules that are available in the learnt system (Gass, 2013, p. 130). This means that it is not expected that students successfully apply conscious rules to their output during conversations, since when they try to monitor during casual talking, they run the risk of compromising the success of the conversation. To avoid this, they often do not pay attention to what the other person is saying as they also plan their next utterances while their conversational partner is talking. Krashen calls these the monitor over-users (Krashen, 1987, p. 89-90). The condition of time was, however, dropped after research proved that the validity of time was dependent on the focus on form (Krashen, 1985, p. 2).

Secondly, to be able to use the monitor effectively, the learner must focus on form and has to consider correctness: **how** s/he is saying her/his utterances.

Finally, for an effective use of the monitor, the performer has to know the rules of the grammar of the linguistic system confronting him or her. However, as Krashen (1987, p. 16) concedes:

This may be a formidable requirement. Linguistics has taught us that the structure of language is extremely complex... our students are exposed only to a small part of the total grammar of the language, and we know that even the best students do not learn every rule they are exposed to.

While, according to Krashen, the main function of the monitor in SLA is to help detect performance errors or deviations from normal speech, its use varies with different individual

learners. As a result there is individual variation in SLA and performance. For instance there are learners who:

- a) use the conscious monitor all the time, and are known as over-users. Monitor over-users are the learners who attempt to monitor their speech all the time, constantly checking their output against their conscious knowledge of their L2. This results in their speaking hesitantly, with noticeable self-corrections in the middle of utterances. They may do this because they have either limited exposure to the L2, or are introverts, or perfectionists, or are not confident enough of their abilities. The flipside of overusing the monitor is that the users do not speak with any real fluency.
- b) have not learnt, or prefer not to use, their conscious knowledge even when conditions are conducive. These are the under-users who would rather not use their conscious knowledge and are not inhibited by error correction. They have the “feel” for language correctness and make more use of their ‘acquired’ knowledge than of their ‘learned skills’ (Krashen, 1987). This is typical of extroverts.
- c) use the monitor appropriately. These are the best kind of users who use the skills they have learnt to supplement the knowledge they have ‘acquired’ of their L2 (Watermeyer, 1993). They use the monitor only when it is appropriate and when it does not interfere with communication.

2.4.3 THE AFFECTIVE FILTER HYPOTHESIS

In the Affective Filter Hypothesis Krashen (1982) is of the view that affective variables have a direct relationship to the L2 acquisition process. To him, learning occurs when there is no barrier affecting the intake of new information (Conteh-Morgan, 2002). Krashen tabulates a number of affective variables that facilitate the L2 acquisition process being: motivation, attitude, self-confidence and anxiety.

According to him, learners who are highly motivated, self-confident and have a good self-image and a low level of anxiety have their affective filters ‘down’ and as such they are better equipped for success in L2 learning. In these learners, new information is efficiently processed in the language acquisition device and integrated into the learners’ knowledge base (Conteh-Morgan, 2002, p. 192).

However, for learners whose filter is ‘up’, because of environmental, social and attitudinal factors such as a low level of motivation, low self-image and debilitating anxiety, the filter is up and the input is barred from passing through to the language acquisition device. If input is

prevented, learning does not occur (Gass, 2013, p. 133). According to Krashen (1982), when the negative affective variables combine they raise the affective filter and form a mental block that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. Therefore, when the learner is experiencing high anxiety, low self-esteem or low motivation, the filter turns up and causes the learner to block out input.

Krashen (1982) believes that the affective filter which protects the language acquisition device from input that is required for acquisition is what makes one individual learner different from another. It explains why some learners learn, while others do not. Individual variation in L2 acquisition is thus attributed to the affective filter (Gass, 2013, p. 133).

RELEVANCE OF THEORIES DEALING WITH ACQUISITION, MONITORING AND THE AFFECTIVE FILTER TO THIS STUDY

According to Krashen (1982, 1987), the monitor refines the acquired knowledge at the production stage. It is therefore expected that L1 siSwati-speakers learning Academic English monitor their performance in their production of L2 and that the amount of errors found in their texts will indicate how the monitor has been applied. In this study I establish whether an L1 siSwati student's monitor tells him or her about his or her performance and if this lack or overuse of monitoring would be due to time factors, focus on form or because students are not conversant with the rules of the L2 grammar confronting them.

While the affective filter falls short of explaining how input is filtered by an unmotivated learner (Gass, 2013, p. 134), in the current study, it helps indicate which barriers confront L1 siSwati-speakers learning Academic English as the L2. It will establish which obstacles prevent a successful intake of new information and which impede the affective filter from operating optimally. It will also establish the learners' rate of motivation, confidence and anxieties. From the biographical information (Chapter 6), 71.5% of the student participants are from rural areas and one would expect that their background is motivation enough for them to learn English in order to improve their and their people's socio-economic status.

2.5 THE INPUT HYPOTHESIS IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

In explaining how learning/acquisition occurs, Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis posits that for SLA to be effective, a comprehensible input (real world linguistic data) must be provided to Chomsky's language acquisition device and an affective filter has to be raised or lowered in order to gain access to that input for processing purposes.

According to the Input Hypothesis, a learner acquires an L2 through the comprehension of the input he or she is exposed to. Gass (2013, p. 131) defines comprehensible input as "that bit of language that is heard/read and that is slightly ahead of a learner's current state of grammatical knowledge."

According to Krashen (1985), input which is built on what the learner already knows does not enable a learner to acquire the L2 and neither does using language structures that are far above the learner's current knowledge. Therefore to improve and progress along the natural order, a learner needs to receive L2 input that is a step beyond, or slightly ahead of his/her current stage of linguistic competence. For instance, if a learner is at stage 'i' (current competence), then acquisition takes place when he/she is exposed to comprehensible input that belongs to a level higher; that is 'i+1'. As Corder (1973, p. 224) argued, the learner has to be taught what he does not yet know of what he needs to know.

To Krashen (1985) the role of the instructor is simply to safeguard that learners receive input that is i+1. This is echoed by Ellis (2008) and Lauren (2011) who argue that learners are aided by their instructors, context, the knowledge of the world, extralinguistic information and their linguistic competence in order to understand structures that they have not yet acquired (i.e. the language that contains a structure that is a little beyond where they are at the present moment).

However, while appealing, Krashen's idea of comprehensible input is difficult to establish and in large classes, it could prove difficult to implement. Because of the large numbers of students in classes, instructors might find it difficult to establish the levels of an individual learner's i so that i+1 is provided. Furthermore, as (Krashen, 1987) himself concedes, the pressures on syllabus completion within a specified period could also make this impossible.

RELEVANCE OF INPUT HYPOTHESIS TO THIS STUDY

Krashen's Input Hypothesis fell out of favour because it was said not to be testable and thus not empirically verifiable (McLaughlin, 1978). His ideas were said to have left a good amount of acquisition unexplained (Gass, 2013; VanPatten & Benati, 2010) and his conclusions were vague and imprecise (Gass & Selinker, 1994; Gass 2013; Mitchell & Myles, 1998). However, the idea that learners acquire language by exposure to input is still valid. It is only through consistent attempts to comprehend language directed at them that learners acquire language and it is only exposure to input that causes acquisition to happen. Krashen's Input Hypothesis will help explain and establish the kinds and amounts of L2 input tertiary students receive from the linguistic environments that culminate in the kinds discourses reflected in their texts. With limited opportunities to experience authentic input from native speakers of English, it remains to be seen how the siSwati input around them facilitates or inhibits students' Academic English linguistic acquisition skills as challenges may be unique with each student.

2.6 THEORIES DEALING WITH INTERDEPENDENCY

Cummins (1981, 1984, 2000) brings another perspective to the SLA debate – the cross-lingual influence of knowledge and skills. Referring to this perspective as the Interdependency Hypothesis, Cummins posits that knowledge and skills learned in the L1 are transferable to the L2. This means that academic proficiencies in L1 and L2 are developmentally interdependent and according to Cummins (2000, p. 183), a strong foundation in one language facilitates the development of the other. Cummins terms conversational skills in both languages the basic interpersonal cognitive skills and the academic ones cognitive academic literacy proficiency

While Cummins' theory of the transferability of knowledge and skills is appealing, other scholars argue that the ability to transfer skills and knowledge depends on the proximity of the languages under study. It is the amount of cognateness between the learner's native language and the additional language that overtly influences the proportion of transferability (Oxford, 1990). Languages that are linguistically distant from each other (such as Japanese-English) as well as those linguistically close to each other (such as English-French) demonstrated significant cross-lingual relationships for cognitive and academic aspects of L1 and L2 proficiency (Cummins 2000, p. 184). The more distant languages showed less cross-lingual relationship, and were, therefore, less interdependent, and those closely-related demonstrated interdependency for writing and reading. This led Cummins to conclude that literacy skills

developed in one language strongly predicted corresponding skills in another language acquired later in time.

In a study of older migrant students whose academic proficiency (literacy skills) in the L1 was already well established, Cummins (1981) noticed that these students developed L2 academic proficiency more rapidly than younger immigrant students. This was confirmed by Verhoeven (1991, p. 72) in a study of bilingual children which established that once academic proficiency is developed in one language, it can be transferred to another if the learner is motivated and exposed enough to the target language.

Noteworthy is that cross-lingual influence operates in both directions, from L1 to L2 and from L2 to L1, depending on the degree of motivation and opportunity generated by the particular acquisition contexts (Cummins, 2000). A certain amount of knowledge of one's L1 can be positively transferred during the process of L2 acquisition and vice versa. This suggests that the linguistic skills and knowledge a child has in either language is very instrumental in the development of corresponding abilities in another language. In other words the consolidation of L1 facilitates the development of the L2.

RELEVANCE OF THE INTERDEPENDENCY THEORY TO THIS STUDY

In the current study I endorse the Interdependency Theory and within its framework I investigate the extent to which Swazi learners' acquisition of skills in Academic English is dependent on their level of literacy in siSwati. The interdependence between L1 and L2 would help shed some light on the levels of L1 development before tertiary students in Swaziland were exposed to the L2. If, as Cummins claims, their L1 was not fully developed to the level of cognitive academic literacy proficiency, it would be cumbersome for them to transfer L1 cognitive academic literacy proficiency skills to the L2. This means that problems of the basic interpersonal cognitive skills transferability are inevitable and this would account for their poor academic language skills. Cognitive academic literacy proficiency development in their L1 might have been never fully developed as the results show that 21.4% of them had learnt English at home during preschool years and 19.6% were exposed to L2 early in their lives. This would suggest that they were sent to English-only schools before they had a chance to learn, read and think effectively in their own languages.

In order to develop L2 abilities, a child's L1 must be sufficiently developed prior to its extensive exposure to the L2. According to Sweetnam-Evans (2001) using English as the sole language of learning and teaching does not improve a learner's proficiency in it: learners should

have a good grounding in both the L1 and the L2. A number of studies have pointed out that it is problematic to achieve full proficiency in the L2 if they have not achieved basic interpersonal cognitive skills in the L1 (Desai, 2010; Heugh, 2013; Nomlomo, 2004, 2010; Saville-Troike, 1984; Yazici et al., 2010).

2.7 SOCIO-COGNITIVE THEORIES

Atkinson (2002, p. 525) views language as a social practice, a social accomplishment, and a social tool with which people act **in** and **on** their social worlds. He observed that to build, express and execute ideas, feelings, actions, and identities, and to acknowledge the existence of other human beings, people use language which cannot be alienated from the social environment thus suggesting that the social elements of language aid the acquisition of language.

In support of this claim, Atkinson argues that a child is inducted into ‘*linguaging*’ from the day it is born, and is cognitively predisposed to language phenomena such as human voices and faces. At this stage the child participates actively in the L1 acquisition process, assisted mainly by the richness of the social context (Atkinson 2002, p. 528). The interaction the child is involved in enables it to share the world view (social practices) of the immediate community and survive in that unpredictable environment by acquiring language.

Atkinson’s (2002) socio-cognitive perspective holds that the best way to promote SLA is to place learners in situations where the L2 is necessary for social action – where they need it to survive and prosper.

The socio-cognitive perspective suggests that the success of learning a language hinges on integrating the knowledge being acquired and the external world that is socially mediated. This means that a learner has to continually align his or her mind and the world, whether with the assistance of others or alone and, it follows that if one is navigating one’s environment (the world), one has to participate in it (Atkinson, Churchill, Nishino & Okada, 2007) via language.

RELEVANCE OF SOCIO-COGNITIVE THEORIES TO THIS STUDY

In the context of the current study, Atkinson’s socio-cognitive perspective will help establish the richness of the environments where L1 siSwati-speakers learn Academic English, and whether the environments enable L2 learners to participate in them in specific and meaningful ways. It will also show the extent to which students in higher education institutions in Swaziland align their minds and the world in their attempt to acquire Academic English. It will

also indicate how other people with whom the students have a social relationship assist them with this alignment.

2.8 CONSTRAINTS TO SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

From the foregoing discussions, it is evident that SLA is a gradual, complex process which is an interplay of many effects. As Gass and Selinker (1994, p. 64) observed, the acquisition of an L2 is far too complex a phenomenon to be reduced to a single explanation. The interplay of many effects in the SLA process may thus constrain the task of acquisition. These will be discussed in turn below.

2.8.1 NATIVE LANGUAGE EFFECTS

2.8.1.1 LANGUAGE TRANSFER

As Gass (2013) argues, in all aspects of language learning, the L1 indisputably plays a significant role, and transfer is one such role. Traditionally, transfer is regarded as the learner's dependence on L1 linguistic knowledge. To Krashen (1982) transfer results from the learner's falling back on old knowledge or L1 rules when L2 (new) knowledge is inadequately developed. Gass and Selinker (1983) view transfer as the use of previously acquired linguistic knowledge which results in interlanguage forms.

To broaden the definition, Odlin (1989, p. 27) defines transfer as the influence from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired. These views on transfer share three assumptions:

- a) What is transferred is linguistic knowledge conceived as a set of rules;
- b) Dependence on L1 knowledge more or less, is associated with an insufficient grasp of L2 rules;
- c) Transfer ceases when L2 linguistic knowledge has sufficiently developed.

From the definitions rendered above, it appears that transfer is a cognitive process where earlier knowledge, whether acquired implicitly or explicitly, is carried over into an L2 learning situation. This means that an L2 learner uses prior linguistic knowledge or information in the context of an L2 (Gass, 1988). Once Task A is learnt, the language learner transmits that knowledge to the learning of Task B. For instance, if a siSwati-L1 child acquires the knowledge that siSwati sentences are SVO, it will transfer this old knowledge to the new learning situation of any L2.

Referring to French-L1 speakers learning English-L2, Littlewood (1981, p. 505) argues that French learners of English already possess knowledge of how their L1 word order signals meaning: for example, how the logical object becomes the grammatical subject when the passive voice is used. They also have the cognitive habit of paying attention to and signalling number each time they use a noun. The knowledge of these domains may be transferred to their learning of English. The positive transference of a whole body of L1 knowledge makes the acquisition process of an L2 much easier and quicker. However, within the domains they have mastered in their L1, the learners may transfer knowledge that is not appropriate and it is this transfer (negative transfer) that may lead them into making errors under the influence of French.

In the context of the present study, an example of transfer is evident in what De Klerk & Gough (2002, p. 363) refer to as ‘new quantifier forms’. L1 siSwati-speakers learning Academic English know that in siSwati *-nye* refers to both ‘some’ and ‘other/another’, *-nye* having both contrastive and non-contrastive significances. The problem arises when Swati-speakers, aware of the contrast, choose the contrastive ‘others’ in English, and use it before both noun phrases, unaware that English does not allow this.

(1) *Other students try, others do not care.

<i>Laba-nye ba-fundzi</i>	<i>ba-y-etam-a</i>	<i>laba-nye</i>	<i>a-ba-na-n-dzaba</i>
ADJ.2-nye NP2-students	SM2-PRES.DISJ.-try-FV	ADJ.2-nye	NEG-SM2-ASS-NP9-matter

The error above is an indicator of transfer operating at the learners’ level of linguistic competence.

Transfer is also operational at the other levels of language description. In one institution in Swaziland, I asked my class if they minded postponing a test to a later date because I had other commitments on the day scheduled for the test. The whole class chorused “yes” to mean that they did not mind or welcomed the postponement whereas most L1 English-speakers would have answered “No” implying that they did not mind. Had I not been native Swazi, and exposed to the concept of New Englishes (Mesthrie, 1992, De Klerk, 1996; Gough 1996; Watermeyer, 1996; Arua 1998, 2004) such a response would have come as a shock, but as an L1 speaker of siSwati I knew they had transferred the siSwati discourse strategy; ‘*Yebo, singatsandza kutsi itest ichutjelwe embili*’ (Literally: Yes, we would love that the test it must be pushed forward).

While scholars of transfer (Lado 1957; Littlewood 1981; Krashen 1982; Odlin 1989,) argue that these are the kinds of transfers that are the major causes of error and that constrain L2 acquisition, Gass (1979, 1984) argues that the use of L1 information in an L2 situation is a selection process. She argues that it is only certain principles that make some L1 structures more likely to be transferred than others.

2.8.1.2 L1 – L2 PAIRINGS

Investigations into L1 and L2 pairings have shown that if the L1 and the language learnt are congruent, the learning of the L2 will be easier and quicker. For instance, Birdsong and Molis (2001, p. 246) found that Spanish and English are interrelated in many fundamental respects:

- a) Their unmarked word order is SVO;
- b) The vocabularies share many cognates;
- c) The grammars use both inflectional and adverbial means of marking tense/aspect distinction.

According to Birdsong and Molis (2001) there are fairly few parameters of Spanish that necessitate reorganizing to English values. These and other similarities might give native speakers of Spanish at least some short-term advantages in the rate of learning English, unlike Korean or Chinese learners whose languages are dissimilar to English.

In order to empirically verify the transfer hypotheses, Ringbom (1987) conducted studies in Finland which involved Finnish and Swedish speakers learning English. The results of this study showed that the Swedes were better than the Finns in learning English. It was argued that this was because Swedish and English are more similar structurally than English and Finnish. The Swedes were, therefore, able to positively transfer their L1 skills to the learning of English and led the researcher to conclude that:

Similarities, both linguistic and interlinguistic, function as pegs on which the learner can hang new information by making use of existing knowledge, thereby facilitating learning (Ringbom, 1987, p. 134).

Ringbom's (1987) conclusion confirms Lado's (1957, p. 2) observation that elements that were similar to a learner's native language would be simpler for him or her, and those that were different would be difficult.

However, structural congruency may inhibit SLA in the sense that transfer between the languages in question may be negative. Negative transfer is known as interference and

interference is defined as the use of the L1 structure in an L2 context when the resulting L2 form is incorrect (Gass & Selinker, 1994, p. 133). When the output of the transfer is incorrect, it may form a learner's interlanguage which could eventually fossilize. Interference and fossilization both constrain SLA.

2.8.1.3 INTERLANGUAGE

Interlanguage is defined as a language-learning phenomenon, a process of creative construction that is activated by a psychological structure dormant in the brain (Selinker, 1972). It is the end result of cross-linguistic transfer. This means that a learner's language continuum, while acquiring the L2, reaches a stage where the L2 linguistic knowledge reaches a plateau of attainment. The learner's linguistic norm is what has been acquired up to the plateau of attainment. Interlanguage is also defined as a temporary language system produced when a learner is trying to acquire an L2. It is temporary because it tends to fall off as the learner reaches the near native state of the L2.

Selinker (1972) views an interlanguage not as a corrupted version of a learner's L2 but as an internal linguistic system which is neither the L1 nor the L2, but something in-between that the learner builds from the environmental data. The learner's L1 serves as a source language providing the initial building grammatical building materials which are gradually blended with materials taken from the L2 by the learner, resulting in new language forms that are neither in the L1 nor in the L2.

Braidi (1999, p. 20) views an interlanguage as a series of grammars developed by the language learner at different points in the L2 acquisition process. At a given time, it projects the following characteristics: its grammar is systematic, permeable, transitional, and discrete and yet it is also rule-governed and as a result learners can make judgements as to what is or is not grammatical, based on their current interlanguage grammar systems.

An interlanguage is permeable because it allows for the adoption of L1 rules in the interlanguage grammar as well as for the overgeneralization of an interlanguage rule in L2 contexts in which this rule is appropriate. Interlanguage is transitional because it can change over time. It may fossilize or develop in ways that more closely approximate the target language norms.

At the interlanguage state of the acquisition process, learners unconsciously make errors to provide order and structure to the linguistic stimuli surrounding them (Brown, 1994) by using

or loaning lexical items and grammar from the L1 , by over-generalizing L2 grammar rules and by directly translating..

Patterns such as **write – writed** (instead of **wrote**), **go – goed** (instead of **went**), **seeing once is seeing twice** (instead of **once bitten twice shy**) are examples of interlanguage. This suggests that learners hypothesize and test the hypotheses until they succeed in establishing a closer approximation to the system used by native speakers. Ellis (1985) says L2 learners construct rules from the data they come across in their own language system (input) and adapt these rules in the direction of the L2 and in the process they make errors which develop into the rules of the L2 if not checked. Therefore, from this discussion, it appears that interlanguage constrains SLA when the errors learners make in their processing of L2 develop into grammatical rules of the L2 and remain unchecked or eventually fossilize.

Findings in this study have pointed to the fact that one of the challenges students encountered in Academic English classes at high school in Swaziland was having their work not being marked by instructors. This seems to suggest that the errors they might have made in their work went unnoticed and they might have eventually fossilized.

2.8.1.4 FOSSILIZATION

Fossilization is one of the features of interlanguage (Ellis, 1985) and it refers to the end-state of SLA, specifically one that is not native-like (VanPatten & Benati, 2010). An end-state is the point at which a learner's mental representation of language, developing system, or interlanguage ceases to develop (VanPatten & Benati, 2010, p. 87). To Corder (1981, p. 87) fossilization occurs when the L2 learner retains speech residue of his L1 which is exhibited in the production of an L2. Put differently, fossilization can be defined as the continued use of grammatical structures that are incorrect. According to Han (2004, p. 13), fossilization is “a phenomenon of non-progression of learning despite continuous exposure to input, adequate motivation to learn, and sufficient opportunity for practice”.

This is a stage where one's learning process cannot be extended any further. It appears that in language acquisition, there comes a time of stagnation in the minds of L2 learners when they appear unable to learn any more. Liszka (2004) argues that students tend to keep items, rules and subsystems in their interlanguages that may or may not be standard. She describes this period as the ‘end-state’ and refers to the language of the L2 speakers as exhibiting signs of ‘selective fossilization’ (Liszka, 2004, p. 213): learners use the morphosyntax of the target language differently from native speakers, the differences are selective and are not reflected

across the whole range of morphosyntactic properties reflected in the L2. To Selinker (1972) whether fossilization is selective or not, it is a period in a learner's learning curve that is beyond remediation no matter what the age of the learner or the amount of explanation and instruction received in the target language.

I would agree with VanPatten and Benati (2010, p. 88), who argue that 'fossilization' is an inappropriate term to describe the unredeemable stage in a learner's cognitive domain. Apart from pronunciation errors (accent) that fossilize as a consequence of regional variation, and depending on the goal of learning the L2, I also believe that all errors are subject to correction. VanPatten and Benati (2010), therefore, prefer to use 'stabilization' instead of 'fossilization' because the former suggests a plateau in learning and not necessarily a complete cessation in development.

2.8.2 EXOGENOUS EFFECTS

2.8.2.1 INPUT

Koda (2007) defines learning as a cognitive process where structural regularities inherent in input are detected, abstracted and internalized. Input is the language that learners are exposed to and is a critical variable because it is the major data source for the language learner:

The learner goes about constructing some kind of grammar on the basis of the exemplars in the input (VanPatten & Benati, 2010, p. 36).

Acquisition is the result of the interaction of the data from the environment. In instructed SLA, input is the primary data on which learners build linguistic systems (VanPatten & Benati, 2010, p. 37) but the quality and the quantity of the input can counteract acquisition because:

Classroom environments tend not to offer the same kind and amount of input as the 'outside world'. At the same time, the outside world may not offer the more complex input that classrooms sometimes offer via texts and classroom discourse that is planned or more elaborate than everyday conversation. ... context may [therefore] constrain acquisition because it constrains access to the amount and types of input learners get (VanPatten & Benati, 2010, p. 56-7).

In Swaziland, the paucity of L1 English-speakers suggests that there is a lack of authentic L1 input in and outside the classrooms. Furthermore, the use of the L2 in speech is confined to particular domains, more often than not, the classroom. Once again this results in a lack of authentic input, as the findings reveal that outside and among themselves, both students and their instructors in tertiary institutions in Swaziland generally converse in their L1. This suggests that SiSwati L1 learners are largely surrounded by L1 input, not only at home but also

at institutions of learning. It is important to note, however, that their instructors do not only speak siSwati with them but mix English and siSwati codes in the classrooms.

2.8.2.2 ACCESS TO INTERACTION

The Interaction Hypothesis posits that learners acquire the L2 if they interact with native speakers in the negotiation of meaning⁷. In Swaziland, higher education students have very little exposure to native speakers of English⁸ for authentic usage. As such, scaffolding and keeping them on track about what is authentic use of English is dependent on the instructor, who is also not a native speaker of English, and the more fluent students in the classroom.

RELEVANCE OF CONSTRAINTS TO THIS STUDY

From the discussion on transfer above, it is evident that transfer, input, and interaction in particular play a significant role in SLA. For instance, forms that are transferred positively, or even negatively, aid SLA and the success or failure in L2 learning is to a certain extent dependent on the modelling of the learner's prior linguistic knowledge. L2 learners use their L1 linguistic information in the context of an L2 and the L1 serves as a scaffolding device on which to learn their L2. This means that the learner's prior linguistic knowledge is facilitative to the SLA process.

In the context of L1 siSwati, this means that the acquisition process tertiary learners were exposed to as children prior to L2 learning is carried over into the new learning situation. Therefore, their acquisition of Academic English knowledge is shaped and facilitated by their past experiences with the L1 which is very often purely oral.

The theories I have attempted to explicate in this section lead me to pose the following questions:

- i) To what extent does imperfect tuition in siSwati as an L1 result in imperfect acquisition of the L2?
- ii) To what extent do grammatical structures of the Swati language function as pegs on which the higher education students in Swaziland hang new linguistic information?

In this research I needed to establish to what extent the incongruent structure of the students' L1 (siSwati) hinders successful L2 (English) acquisition, with a particular emphasis on

⁷ See Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of the Interaction Hypothesis.

⁸ See Figure 6 for the numbers of academic staff whose L1 is English.

Academic English. The following questions further assisted me in developing a comprehensive and useful narrative on the language problems facing students at Swaziland's tertiary institutions:

- i) Have L1 siSwati students of Academic English developed interlanguages?
- ii) To what extent have L1 siSwati students' interlanguage rules been checked and corrected by instructors?
- iii) Is there a tendency by English lecturers in Swaziland's academic institutions to over-correct perfectly acceptable English, while ignoring other, more problematic issues in students' academic discourses?
- iv) Are interlanguage errors made by L1 siSwati learners of Academic English becoming fossilized?

The concept of fossilization will assist in answering the questions:

- i) What are the cultural constraints or personality factors that impede successful completion of SLA among Swazi learners?
- ii) What are the psycho-social factors responsible for 'fossilized competence' among Swazi learners?

The constraints discussed above have given some insights into the complexity of the language acquisition process. Transfer, which could be viewed positively, turns out to be a hindrance when it is negative. In this study I establish whether there are similarities and or differences between the syntactic structures of Swazi learners' L1 and L2 and if students are transferring the structure of their L1 when using the L2 and, if so, where the morpho-syntactic structure of the L1 causes error in the L2. I also establish the instances where the absence of a syntactic structure in the L1 creates difficulty for the learner when writing and speaking the L2. Finally I examine whether L1 siSwati-speakers have constructed interlanguages that have fossilized and whether lecturers themselves have a 'fossilized' idea of what constitutes correct English. I hope that this research will enable higher education and policy makers in Swaziland to collaborate in developing intervention strategies to influence and improve students' (and lecturers') academic discourse.

2.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have considered a wide range of processes involved in SLA. I have also examined the language acquisition theories advanced for both L1 and L2 acquisition. L1

acquisition theories have been relevant in foregrounding or benchmarking SLA. All theories referred to in this chapter (apart from behaviourism) attest to the fact that language acquisition is a cognitive process and those that deal with SLA suggest pedagogically sound ways for aiding acquisition.

While all the theories have important insights as to how language is learnt, those that concentrate on SLA are most germane to this study. Krashen's (1987) Input Hypothesis, the Interdependency Theory, Error Analysis Hypothesis and the Interaction Hypothesis will be most helpful to the study in explaining why siSwati-speakers in Swaziland struggle with Academic English.

Taking into account the processes involved in SLA and the theories that attempt an explanation of these processes, in this study I seek to uncover ways in which Academic English acquisition has been affected by L1 siSwati and I hope to develop a comprehensive theory from the findings.

CHAPTER 3: A DISCUSSION OF THE CONCEPT OF ACADEMIC ENGLISH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The ability to perform academically in English cannot be overemphasized, both locally and in a global context. Proficiency in Academic English is one way of attaining socioeconomic and academic success in the corporate and public world and in academia. Globally it is an integral part of quality education responsible for modernization (Hu, 2004; Scarcella, 2003). Locally, and more specifically in Swaziland, Academic English means having attained internationally acceptable standards and is, for learners, a gateway to continuing education and tertiary education within Swaziland, the Southern African Development Communities (SADC) and internationally. However, functioning effectively in educational settings has proven very difficult for some learners in tertiary institutions as they seem to manifest serious weaknesses in this important communication tool. The incapacity to function efficiently in English has, in turn, hindered their academic goals and made them suffer the consequences of linguistic discrimination (Chimbganda, 2011; Lillies, 2001; Scarcella, 2003; Webb, 2002).

In this chapter I discuss the concept of Academic English in both general and academic contexts. I begin by defining Academic English from different perspectives and then tabulate those features of this variety that learners have to be most conversant with. A treatment of the main linguistic features of Academic English therefore forms the core discussion of this study as it is critical to establish which key features of this variety of English are essential for siSwati L1 speakers to master in order to succeed in academia.

I end this chapter with a discussion of previous research on Academic English. This is done in order to reveal the challenges posed by Academic English to students in higher education.

3.2 DEFINING ACADEMIC ENGLISH

Academic English can be defined as a highly ranked variety of English that is used by educated individuals in academia, business settings, courts of law and all formal communication. In institutions of learning, it is used to acquire and transmit knowledge and is also a set of discursive relations that allows learners access to the lexico-semantic demands of tertiary institutions (Corson, 1997, p. 673). It is a specialized, technical language; a register of English

characterized by specific linguistic features that are associated with academic disciplines or content areas such as Science, Economics, Linguistics, Art and Medicine, and one that includes a diverse vocabulary (Corson, 1997; Cummins, 2000) .

Academic English is required for long-term success in schooling, career advancement and employment and allows students to handle the demands of a particular discipline or the workplace after training. It entails a:

Mastery of a writing system together with its particular academic conventions as well as proficiency in reading, speaking, and listening (Scarcella, 2003, p. 3).

For learners to be labelled proficient in Academic English, or in any languages, there are skills and knowledge that they are expected to acquire within each of the four language domains⁹.

Academic English is not the primary language spoken at home by English L1 speakers nor is it the everyday English L2 interlocutors use in communication and it is certainly not the variety that L2 learners would have mastered as they grew up (Corson, 1997; De Kadt & Mathonsi, n.d.). Rather, it is a formal or technical register associated with a particular discipline.

Academic English has also been referred to as a set of “meaning systems” with “rules, signs and symbols” (Corson, 1997, p. 675) that favour particular cultures and particular Western ways of thinking. Thus, for a Swazi student, not only is Academic English not his or her L2, but also s/he is further separated from this discourse by way of cultural factors and considerations. In order to gain access to Academic English the average Swazi student must learn not only a new language, but a new way of thinking.

Gaining academic qualifications, being able to carry out tasks that require high levels of academic literacy and being productive in the kinds of employment tertiary students in Swaziland and the world over qualify for, all depend on how successfully they have acquired this specialized language, this new set of discursive relations. If they do not successfully acquire it, they stand to be excluded from international debates, international competitiveness and the unprecedented challenges of globalization. It has been argued that academic meaning systems:

⁹ See Figure 2: Table 1 in this chapter.

Have been shaped by the special culture of literacy over several millennia. They are the world's most influential meaning systems (Corson, 1997, p. 676).

3.3 DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON ACADEMIC ENGLISH

Different scholars have different views on what constitutes Academic English and as such they have brought different perspectives to the Academic English proficiency debate. These scholars and their insights will be discussed below.

3.3.1 ACADEMIC ENGLISH AS A SET OF ACADEMIC MEANING SYSTEMS (CORSON, 1997)

According to Corson (1997) Academic English is a set of academic meaning systems that operate on rules and conventions of use for the signs and symbols that carry meaning within the system (Corson, 1997, p. 676). Competent use of the signs is reflected in the use of the words of the system (language). For a learner, competence in an academic meaning system is reflected in his or her ability to manage the signs and symbols of the system skilfully. This means that Academic English is a meaning system and proficiency in it entails the learner's abilities to skillfully manage the rules and conventions of the signs and symbols of this variety of English.

According to Corson (1997), academic meaning systems are moulded by a Western culture of literacy which means that access to the Academic English meaning system is inextricably linked to literacy activities of Western thought. Its understanding encompasses one that develops Western ways of reasoning and to become literate (immersed in the 'the culture of literacy') requires passing through intellectual, linguistic and societal adjustments (Corson, 1997, p. 680). This is the gateway to engaging with the culture of literacy and actively participating in Academic English.

The culture of literacy is dominated by Graeco-Latin vocabulary; a vocabulary that is distant from everyday practices for many people and one that serves as a gate-keeping measure for entrance to universities and colleges in the United States (Corson, 1997) and the world over (De Kadt & Mathonsi, n.d.; Lillies, 2001; Webb, 2002; Scarcella, 2003; Chimbganda, 2011). As Cummins (2000, p. 53) argues:

Whether students go to the university, the kind of employment they qualify for – in short, their life chances – depend very much on how successfully they acquire this

specialized language required to gain academic qualifications and carry out literacy-related tasks and activities.

Since at the core of the culture of literacy is the meaning system's vocabulary, it follows that Graeco-Latin vocabulary forms the backbone of Academic English. This suggests that unless a learner masters the vocabulary of Academic English, it is not possible for him or her to operate in this variety of English. Therefore, Corson (1997) views Academic English as a variety of English that is the product of literacy learned in specific settings and its discursive practices differ according to different disciplines. Proficiency in it means mastering its Graeco-Latin lexicon of literacy, the specialized vocabularies of particular content areas, and the ability to interpret and use more sophisticated syntax in oral and written modes (Cummins, 2000, p. 55) as well as coming to terms with its cultural load (De Kadt & Mathonsi, n.d., p. 93).

3.3.2 ACADEMIC ENGLISH AS COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (CALP) – (CUMMINS, 1981, 1984, 2000)

Cummins (1981, 1984, 2000) distinguishes between academic and conversational English by bringing in the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) dichotomy/continuum. According to him BICS is the kind of language (L1 or L2) that is acquired early in a learner's life. It is a basic face-to-face conversational proficiency that is casual and entails the non-formal language of everyday communication in both oral and written forms. It is what Quirk (1974, p. 138) refers to as familiar, homely-sounding language with typically short words, while Gibbons (1991) refers to it as the language of the playground.

According to Cummins, BICS is context-embedded, and cognitively undemanding (Cummins, 1981, 1984, 1996) relying on paralinguistic cues that are context dependent (facial expressions, gestures) and which provide feedback that a message was or was not understood. In an academic setting, students cannot depend only on BICS or context-dependent paralinguistic clues to arrive at meaning but need to understand knowledge categories which often have not featured in their upbringings:

The printed word, the knowledge categories, and the ways of taking meaning from the printed word have little place in many children's worlds (Corson, 1997, p. 681).

Unlike BICS, CALP relies on a highly-structured variety of English that is associated with schooling. According to Quirk (1974, p. 138), this is a type of language with more learned, foreign-sounding words which are characteristically rather long. It is a cognitively demanding language proficiency that is supported by linguistic cues independent of the immediate communicative context. This means that it is a context-reduced genre and in whichever discipline it is used, context-reduced communication relies on linguistic cues for meaning and:

May in some cases involve suspending knowledge of the “real world” in order to interpret (or manipulate) the logic of communication appropriately (Cummins, 1984, p. 11-12).

CALP requires high levels of cognitive involvement (Cummins, 1996, p. 58) and is associated with higher-order thinking skills such as hypothesizing, evaluating, predicting, inferring, generalizing, and classifying (Gibbons, 1991, p. 3). This means that under conditions that demand high cognitive skills such as those listed by Gibbons, it is necessary that learners stretch their linguistic resources to the limit to function successfully (Cummins, 1996, p. 58).

Another characteristic of CALP is that it is difficult to master as it is linear, having one central point or theme with every part spiralling from, or contributing to, the main line of argument without digressions or repetitions. Since its main objective is to inform, CALP is impersonal and precise but the precision does not result in brevity as it often uses long carefully constructed sentences. In formal writing, for example, the writer avoids contractions and uses a more specialized and complex vocabulary that is influenced by the specific genre or discipline (Cummins, 1984, 1996, 2000). CALP is thus achieved through students' exposure to language and content that is cognitively challenging and supported by both contextual and linguistic scaffolding.

Research that accepts Cummins framework suggests that CALP happens after several years of schooling (Corson, 1997; Saville-Troike, 1984, 1991). In the schooling system learners spend twelve years attempting to extend their basic communication skills into more specialized domains and functions of language. Schools and higher institutions of learning focus on developing the different registers of this language which learners need in order to progress successfully and function proficiently in the world of work. Despite the length of time they are exposed to this variety of language, learners still find it a challenge and this challenge becomes more evident when they enter institutions of higher learning, especially those with different L1 backgrounds and cultures (Chimbganda 2011; Corson, 1997; Lillies, 2001).

Cummins (1981, 1984) presents Academic English as a fixed entity that is either acquired or not and thus his theories have fallen out of favour, because, according to Scarcella (2003), they are over simplistic and present a conceptualization of language that is not useful for understanding the complexities of Academic English. They ignore the multiple variables that are responsible for the development of BICS and CALP and to Scarcella (2003, p. 6), Cummins' theory:

Is of limited practical value since it fails to operationalize tasks and therefore does not generate tasks that teachers can use to help develop their students' Academic English.

Zamel and Spack (1998) argue that efforts to teach Academic English are limiting and counterproductive since there has not been any consensus in terms of standards in the varieties of Academic English in conventional academic literacies. They contend that Academic English is itself varied and as such there are no generally accepted standards of academic discourse adhered to by all academicians. To them, Academic English actually consists of numerous dynamic and evolving literacies. Therefore, institutions of learning should “accept wider varieties of expression, to embrace multiple ways of communicating” (Zamel & Spack, 1998, p. xi).

On the above premise they suggest that educational institutions should admit a wide range of various expressions to embrace the numerous ways of communicating, as standard cognitive academic literacy proficiency marginalizes learners whose English is not acceptable in contexts that are academic. While I acknowledge the criticisms levelled against Cummins, I do not entirely agree with Zamel and Spack (1998) that there are no accepted standards of academic discourse, because, I believe that even varieties of English (i.e. Australian, American, South African) are characterized by distinctive characteristics and are rule-governed. During the course of this research, however, I discovered that my own notions of what constitutes acceptable Academic English discourse is sometimes overly conservative influencing me to concentrate more on the form, rather than on the content, of students' Academic English writing. I still believe, however, that there are norms or standards for any variety, discipline, register or genre and that the highly complex structure of Academic English must be learnt, but at a much earlier level than tertiary or even secondary institutions. Subscribing to unitary

Academic English norms is emphasized by Canagarajah and Said (2010, p. 160) when they argue that:

A proficient speaker of English in the postmodern world needs the capacity to negotiate varieties. He or she should be able to shuttle between different norms, recognizing the systematic and legitimate status of different varieties of English in this diverse family of languages. ... In extremely formal institutional context, where inner circle norms are conventional (such as academic communication), one has to adopt the established norms. Proficiency in the world of postmodern globalization requires the ability to negotiate this variability.

Findings of this study (see Chapter 6) point to the fact that immersion in discursive literacy practices that lead to academic literacies are largely absent in Swazi households suggesting that reading interventions need to be initiated even at preschool stages. According to Corson (1997, p. 681), schools can do little to radically change the vocabularies of students who have a vastly different sociocultural background to that favoured by the school:

The acquisition of literacy in schools probably does little to change the active vocabularies of children who occupy sociocultural positions at a distance from the kinds of meaning systems given high status in the school.

But what are these high-status meaning systems?

Scarcella (2003) brings a perspective that provides a global understanding of the general language components and features that learners must develop to acquire Academic English. While not specifying the precise language features to be learned at different grades and at different English proficiency levels, her framework provides what is to be taught and learnt in Academic English which she summarizes in the table below.

FIGURE 2: TABLE 1: SCARCELLA'S LINGUISTIC COMPONENTS OF ACADEMIC ENGLISH

Linguistic Components	Linguistic Components of Ordinary English	Linguistic Components of Academic English
The Phonological Component	Knowledge of everyday English sounds and the way sounds are combined, stress and intonation, graphemes and spelling.	Knowledge of the phonological features of Academic English, including stress, intonation and sound patterns
The Lexical Component	Knowledge of the forms and meanings of words occurring in everyday situations; knowledge of the ways words are formed with prefixes, roots, suffixes, the parts of speech of words, and the grammatical constraints governing words	Knowledge of the forms and meanings of words that are used across academic disciplines (as well as in everyday situations outside of academic settings); Knowledge of the ways academic words are formed with prefixes, roots, and suffixes, the parts of speech of academic words, and the grammatical constraints governing academic words
The Grammatical Component	Knowledge of morphemes entailing semantic, syntactic, relational, phonological, and distributional properties; Knowledge of syntax; Knowledge of simple rules of punctuation	Knowledge that enables ELs to make sense out of and use the grammatical features (morphological and syntactic) associated with argumentative composition, procedural description, analysis, definition, procedural description and analysis; Knowledge of the grammatical co-occurrence restrictions governing words; Knowledge of grammatical metaphor; knowledge of more complex rules of punctuation
The Sociolinguistic Component	Knowledge that enables ELs to understand the extent to which sentences are produced and understood appropriately; Knowledge of frequently occurring functions and genres	Knowledge of an increased number of language functions. The functions include the general ones of ordinary English such as apologizing, complaining, and making requests as well as ones that are common to all academic fields; Knowledge of an increased number of genres, including expository and argumentative text
The Discourse Component	Knowledge of the basic discourse devices used, for instance, to introduce topics and keep the talk going and for beginning and ending informal types of writing, such as letters and lists	Knowledge of the discourse features used in specific academic genres including such devices as transitions and other organizational signals that, in reading, aid in gaining perspectives on what is read, in seeing relationships, and in following logical lines of thought; in writing, these discourse features help ELs develop their theses and provide smooth transitions between ideas

According to Scarcella (2003) the linguistic dimension of Academic English is critical in learning and analysing this register. It entails the phonological, lexical, grammatical, sociolinguistic and discourse components which must be mastered by a learner in order for him or her to be deemed proficient in Academic English.

While I am of the view that the Phonological Component should be identical for both categories and be labelled Phonological/Orthographic Component, Scarcella (2003) contends that, at the phonological level of Cummins' (1981, 1984 and 2000) BICS, learners must recognize the English sounds (phonetics) and how they are patterned (phonemes). In the spoken discourse, they must be exposed to pronunciation, stress and intonation patterns. However, in order to use Academic English learners must acquire the phonological features of cognitive academic literacy proficiency that encompass stress, additional intonation, sound patterns and spelling.

The lexical component of language comprises mastery of lexis: the language's vocabulary. While I believe that it should be identical for both categories, the difference is that Academic English has its own extensive vocabulary, much of it specific to particular disciplines. In Academic English, it is the Graeco-Latin vocabulary (Corson, 1997; Cummins, 2000) that enables learners to interact and negotiate meanings. It is the teachers who play a pivotal role in learners' acquisition of second languages by providing the essential tool necessary for learners to become proficient – vocabulary. Lauren (2011, p. 1) argues that for learners that are acquiring a new language, a well-developed vocabulary is the foundation for language acquisition. Allen et al. (1992) also demonstrated the relationship between early exposure to print material and vocabulary development. It is necessary, therefore, that learners learn vocabulary for both daily and academic use, and that this learning should start at an early stage, with printed texts in the home environment. In academic contexts, they must have an expanded reservoir of vocabulary which will include lexical items cutting across disciplines and terminology used in specific fields and nontechnical academic words used across academic fields (Scarcella, 2003, p. 13). What cannot be ignored here is the cultural system that underpins Academic English, as Corson argues:

These academic words are usually put to work in culturally determined ways that are specific to some meaning system or other. So using academic Graeco-Latin words appropriately depends on the language user having a relaxed familiarity with the meaning system that embeds them, which means familiarity with the rules of use for a given word within the system (Corson, 1997, p. 710).

The grammatical component entails a wide understanding of grammar and in order for learners to function adequately in Academic English they need grammatical competence. The grammatical component of cognitive academic literacy proficiency involves an overall knowledge of the BICS grammar and adding on to that the knowledge of structures such as parallel clauses, conditionals, and complex clauses, passive structures and ergative structures, the noun reference, and verb and modality systems. It is also in this component that learners must be conversant with the grammatical restrictions governing the use of nouns, since, according to Scarcella (2003, p. 15), “each time students learn new nouns, they must acquire their grammatical features.” Some researchers advocate that grammatical features and rules cannot be taught but that learners should discover these patterns themselves, advocating a “grammar-in-context” approach which leads the students to grammatical discoveries themselves, with no resort to rule-based explanations (Thurston & Candlin, 1998).

In Academic English the sociolinguistic component involves knowing an increased number of language functions such as those signalling cause and effect, hypothesizing, generalizing and the ability to write cohesively (Scarcella, 2003, p. 18) as well as other specific introductory features and organizational signals which in reading help students gain perspective of what they read, understand relationships and follow logical lines of thought. In writing, these are the features that help students transition smoothly between ideas when they write assignments, tests, project reports and examinations and produce coherent pieces of work. These are the features of Academic English that learners must be instructed in and assessed in academic contexts, but the way in which this instruction is managed should take into account new research and teaching directions (Flowerdew, 1996, 2002; Yoon & Hirvela, 2004).

Scarcella (2003) proposed a framework that presents Academic English as an entity within which are multiple, dynamic, interrelated competencies but her framework needs to be viewed alongside other research which suggests that Academic English has its roots in cultural discursive systems (Corson, 1997) and studies that demonstrate the efficacy of arriving at academic literacies via analyses of existing academic corpora (Flowerdew, 2002; Yoon & Hirvela, 2004).

Scarcella argues that some teachers fail to assist their students in laying down the foundation for the development of Academic English. This could be a result of teachers not spending much time engaging their students in tasks that develop the students’ Academic English and this

could also be attributed to the fact that they themselves may not be using the most important features of Academic English in instructing lessons and may therefore, not expect their students to use these features. Contemporary research suggests that teachers can engage in multimodal activities to reach the desired objectives of Academic English competencies and these include using websites, specially designed computer programs and language corpora (Jabbour, 2001; Odlin, 2001).

Teachers may also fail to articulate their expectations to learners or explicitly teach their students to use Academic English which becomes problematic, because as learners develop, the nature of Academic English comes to rely more heavily on features of written discourse (Scarcella, 2003, p. 8).

Using Scarcella's (2003) breakdown of Academic English linguistic features, in this study I assume that teachers in schools and lecturers in institutions of higher education have taught students this specialized knowledge. It is also expected that graduate students write and speak sophisticated Academic English. However, as will be shown in Chapter 6, the written English of students reveals a lack of knowledge of English spelling, grammatical structures, and vocabulary – skills it could be assumed they would have acquired at school.

According to Wong, Fillmore and Snow (2001), at many public schools and even at higher institutions of learning, instructors do not even know what Academic English is, let alone how to teach it. Similarly, the problems students have in acquiring it are often ignored. Writing on the teaching of English as a L2 in China, Qiang and Wolff (2003, p. 32) noted that:

It is not possible for ESL speakers without immersion in or exposure to ESL culture possibly [to] be effective ESL teachers. [ESL teachers] are certainly capable of dissecting the grammatical rules, analysing English writings, reading extensively, and memorizing vocabulary ... In too many cases ..., their [L2] is so un-English that they cannot possibly correct a student's improper [grammar], and they are so steeped in Chinglish that it is impossible to recognize it and correct it in their students.

Blommaert (2010) refers to the situation alluded to by Qiang and Wolff (2003) as peripheral normativity. The current study looks into the problems that inhibit the acquisition of Academic English in Swaziland's higher education institutions as students' deficiencies in this register have been noted and referred to by a number of scholars working in the field (Webb, 2002; Zulu, 2003).

3.4 CONDITIONS FOR MASTERING THE MEANING SYSTEM OF ACADEMIC ENGLISH

3.4.1 PARTICIPATION IN THE DISCURSIVE PRACTICES OF A LITERATE

According to Corson (1997, p. 678), access to academic meaning systems is obtainable if one engages with them in the literacy culture. This is easier for people who have been nurtured “within and around the institutional forces and experiences that produced them” (Corson, 1997, p. 675).

In my study (see Chapter 6, pp.128, 142) I have discovered that the majority of tertiary learners in Swaziland have been raised in language and family backgrounds in which culture is purveyed orally in their L1 and they have been admitted to L2 academic meaning systems and discursive practices at different levels of their educational careers. From their preschool and primary school years the majority did not receive natural immersion in the culture of literacy in English and when they finally did, during their secondary and high school years, it appears that they had missed what Corson refers to as “foundation immersion” that is imperative to “support the presentation of their special insights in school-acceptable ways” (Corson, 1997, p.681).

The key to literacy culture is vocabulary (Corson 1997; Cummins, 2000; Krashen, 1987; Lauren 2011; Scarcella, 2003). This is what Scarcella (2003) refers to as the lexical component of language in Table 1 above and will now be discussed in detail.

3.4.1.1 VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

For learners to develop language and be able to skilfully manage the meaning systems of a discipline, they need to have and master its vocabulary. According to Lauren (2011) and Saville-Troike (1984), the knowledge of vocabulary is the single most central area of L2 competence and according to Lightbown and Spada (2006, p. 96), communication breaks down if interlocutors do not use the correct words. This suggests that a limited vocabulary does not only constrain a learner from handling the content and the demands of a discipline but it also severely affects communication in a variety of settings such as reading, speaking, comprehending meaning and writing in an academic meaning system.

Lauren (2011) is of the view that it is only when learners understand messages communicated to them that they acquire a language and it is exposure to sufficient vocabulary in the target language that makes this possible because vocabulary facilitates comprehension and comprehension lubricates the wheels for acquisition. This means that without vocabulary and its comprehension ability, acquisition will not take place.

When students are able to recognize words without relying on the surrounding context, these words become internalized into the student's personal vocabulary and allow them to learn new words. The more vocabulary words they know, the more successful they will be not only in listening and comprehending others, but when speaking themselves (Lauren, 2011, p. 2).

While students are able to acquire vocabulary on their own, much of their knowledge stems from the classroom through the facilitation of the instructor. It is thus the instructor's role to equip learners with the necessary tools until they reach high proficiency levels in the meaning system of a particular discipline.

While Corson (1997) acknowledges the fact that studies on differentiation in vocabulary suggest that its distribution is different among learners from different socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds, vocabulary remains crucial to proficiency and success in Academic English. Learners need to have a diverse vocabulary in order to understand content and communicate meaning since not only does vocabulary mark proficiency in reading in education, it is the knowledge of content especially the knowledge of the semantics and the rules of their use that is fundamental to mastering texts and gaining entry to the culture of literacy (Chall, 1987).

The key player in the development of vocabulary is conversation. According to Corson (1997, p. 683) "talk as the practical discourse of schooling" aids the development of vocabulary which means that it is interacting or participating in the discursive practices in English discourse in the culture of literacy that boosts not only the development of the vocabulary of Academic English in and outside the classroom but Western ways of thinking which are hegemonic in academic discourses. Findings of this study indicate that in Swaziland most conversational interactions are in the learners' L1, siSwati, (see Chapter 6, p.133: Figure 13: Frequency of students speaking siSwati on campus) which would make it difficult for them to learn, and cognitively absorb, academic vocabulary via talking discourses.

3.4.1.2 CONVERSATION ABOUT TEXTS IN ACADEMIC ENGLISH

According to Lightbown and Spada (2006, p. 98), among the factors that make new vocabulary learnable by L2 learners is the frequency with which the word is seen, heard, used and understood. One way in which this is probable is through talk; talk about text. ‘Talk about text’ is defined as “a kind of discourse where learners can talk repeatedly about knowledge gained from texts using an acquired metalanguage set against a meaning system used to interpret and extend understanding” (Corson, 1997, p. 684).

This means that it is through talking about the texts using the jargon of that text that learners gain understanding of its content, share in its paradigm and acquire the ability to use the appropriate lexis of that discipline.

As pointed out earlier, findings of this study point to the fact that engagement in conversational literacy practices that are central to academic literacies are mostly lacking in Swazi households (see Chapter 6, Sections 6.6.2 and 6.6.3). This suggests that reading interventions need to be introduced even at preschool stages. Most ‘talk’ amongst learners themselves and amongst their instructors is predominantly in siSwati, and the environments in which Academic English is learnt are acquisition poor. According to Corson (1997, p. 688):

If [learners] do not have opportunities outside the classroom to use academic words in motivated ways ..., then their learning of these words becomes a hit-and-miss affair, especially if their teachers are not confirming their conceptual development in some way.

Conversing in Academic English finds support in Long’s (1983, 1996) Interaction Hypothesis which posits that it is interaction between native and non-native speakers of an L2 that facilitates greater acquisition of the L2. According to Long (1996), learning develops in paired interactions as learners go about making sense of each other’s talk and conditions for acquisition are created only when learners are engaged in decoding and encoding messages in the context of actual acts of communication. In other words this means that in order to develop fluency in the L2 learners must have opportunities to engage in real communication and if they do not receive such exposure to the target language they cannot acquire it.

Founded on the Constructivist Theory of Vygotsky (1978, 1979) that posited that students construct their own learning through reflection and experience as they constantly interact with

new educational situations, the Interaction Theory argues that the interactional modifications which take place in conversations between native speakers and non-native speakers are the necessary mechanisms for L2 acquisition to take place (Lightbown & Spada, 1993, p. 29).

Long (1983, 1996) argues that for a full understanding of input to L2 learning, it is important that attention is paid to the interactions in which learners are engaged. The interactions should be viewed as the principal resource of the target language input that feeds into the learner's alleged internal acquisition device. It is when learners engage with their conversational partners in negotiating meaning that the nature of the input might be qualitatively changed, hence acquisition (Mitchell & Myles, 1998, p. 122).

The Interaction Theory posits that acquisition depends on the input data learners are exposed to because it is through input in the form of modifications and feedback from native speakers that non-native speakers of an L2 may be led to notice linguistic structures of the target language. It is this observation that influences acquisition.

The interactionists believe that in an L2 situation it is the input or feedback of the target language's native speaker that is important as it models correct language behaviour and this cannot be overemphasized as native speakers have been using English for their whole life, while non-native speakers are years behind them in the amount of English they have at their disposal. However, in Swaziland it is the input from peers and instructors (who are also L2 speakers of English) in the discipline under study that models Academic English.

In an L2 acquisition situation, feedback can be either overt or inherent. Feedback refers to the response that a learner receives with regard to the language he or she produces. Implicit feedback takes the form of comprehension checks, clarification requests and self-repetition (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Long, 1996). Learners use their growing language abilities or interlanguages (Selinker, 1972) as they communicate back, in the process fine-tuning the linguistic input they are receiving from the partners with whom they are having the conversation. During the interaction, learners can correct some type of errors they make while others would be explicitly taught (Conteh-Morgan, 2002). The result of such an exchange is communicative competence where a learner gains the ability to communicate effectively using different registers in different contexts.

According to Long (1983, 1996) the linguistic modifications that occur during an interaction, or as meaning is negotiated, provide L2 learners with the input they need and also opportunities

to understand and use the language that they did not understand. The input they need in this case is what Krashen (1985, 1987) refers to as the $i+1$. The interactionists' view is that classroom talk is very important as it provides opportunities for the practice of specific language features and most importantly it triggers the L2 acquisition process.

Through negotiation (repetitions and requests for clarification), the non-native speakers and their conversational partners signal their lack of understanding and through interactional adjustments the learners gain opportunities to understand and use the language that they at first did not understand (Loschky, 1994; Mackey, 1999; Pica, Young, Doughty et al., 1987). In a study by Lee (2004), whose focus was on the learning conditions non-native speakers of Spanish perceived to be necessary for satisfactory communication with native speakers, the results demonstrated that online collaboration promoted the scaffolding by which the native speakers assisted the non-native speakers in composing meaning (ideas) and form (grammar).

However, counteracting Long's hypothesis, Lee (2004), argues that learning goes beyond 'what' the individual produces, and focusses on 'how' the individual interacts with others through a joint activity, suggesting that the process of negotiation encompasses the interrelationship between two parties whose actions are influenced by their intentions, goals and learning conditions.

In the context of the current study, not only does Long's (1996) hypothesis emphasize the importance of exposure to native speakers and the role they play in the teaching and learning of an L2, it also emphasizes the importance of talk in vocabulary development and participation in the literacy culture. Further, the native and non-native speakers' pairing not only facilitates the development of students' discourse competence but the expertise of the peer students and how the nature of the task and the goals of the learners affect their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1989). This is the distance between what they can achieve by themselves and what they can achieve with assistance from others (Lee, 2004, p. 61).

Tertiary institutions in Swaziland, apart from the challenge of many students in the classes have no native speakers of English in the classrooms. In personal conversations with the lecturers in the institutions surveyed, I found that in all the colleges there were no students or lecturers who spoke English as an L1. At the Swaziland College of Technology most of the participants could speak English fairly well, but the only student who indicated that siSwati was not his/her L1 had another African language as an L1. At Ngwane College, of the staff of forty, thirty-eight are siSwati L1speakers, two speak other L1s and all of them speak English as an L2. At the

William Pitcher Teachers' College, all fifty-six members of academic staff speak siSwati L1 and English L2. At the Swaziland College of Technology of the fifty-four members of staff, forty-seven speak siSwati L1, seven speak another L1, and all speak English as an L2. At the Southern Africa Nazarene University Faculty of Education, thirty-eight lecturers speak siSwati L1, two speak another L1, and all speak English as an L2. In the Faculty of Health there are two lecturers who speak an L1 other than siSwati, one speaks English as an L1 and eleven speak English as an L2. This is shown in the table below.

FIGURE 3: TABLE 2: NUMBER OF LECTURING STAFF SPEAKING L1 SISWATI AND L2 ENGLISH

Institution	Number of Lecturers	L1 SiSwati	L1 English	L1 Other	L2 English
SCOT	54	47	0	7	54
WPTC	56	56	0	0	56
Ngwane	40	38	0	2	40
SANU Health	12	9	1	2	11
SANU Ed	40	38	0	2	40
Total	202	195	1	13	201

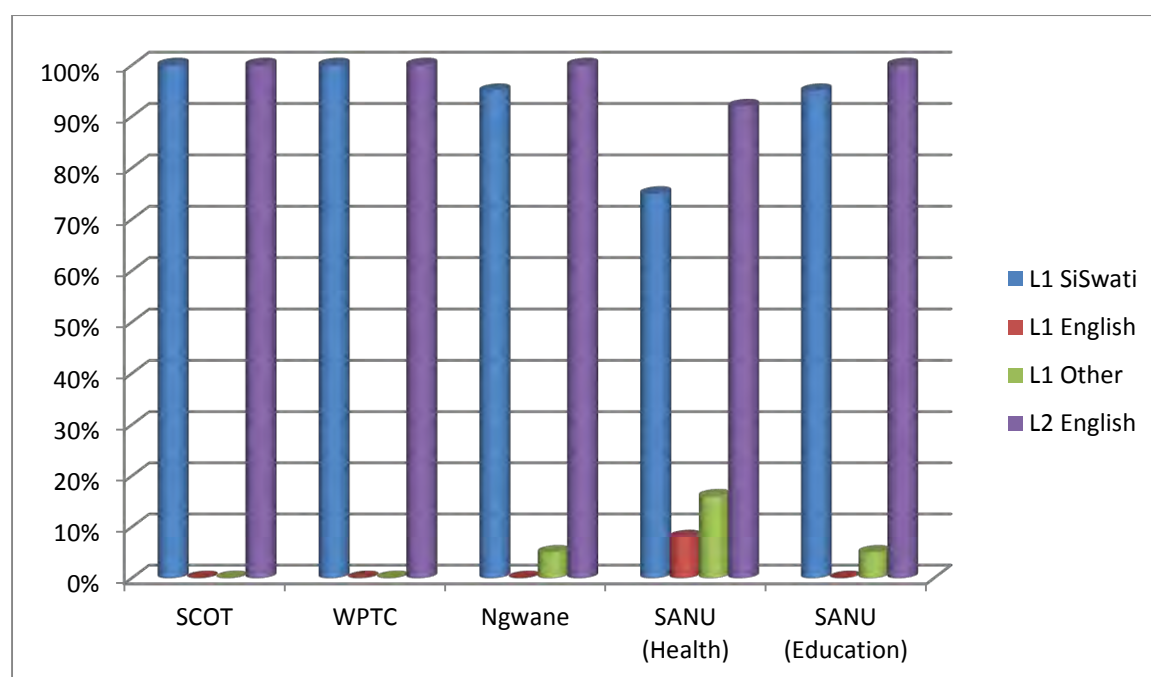
Graphically the above numbers can be represented as shown in Figure 4 below.

Table 2 above and Figure 4 below show that 93.1% of the overall number of members of academic staff in higher institutions of learning in Swaziland speak siSwati as an L1. Only 0.5% speak English as an L1 and 6.4 % speak a language other than siSwati and English as an L1 and 99.5% speak English as an L2. With the large number of academic staff speaking English as an L2, this means that the learners in these institutions are predominantly not exposed to input from L1 English speakers.

With the challenge of the absence of native speakers of English in higher education in Swaziland, it appears that students in these institutions only get to negotiate meaning and receive 'comprehensible' input from their instructors and among themselves (i.e. the fluent and

the less fluent). As such they may not be pushed hard enough in their production and comprehension of Academic English, nor will this situation encourage them to try out new forms or modify others. They may not even realize the mismatch between their own interlanguage systems and Academic English as no one keeps them on track about authentic use. It appears, therefore, that students (and staff) have very few opportunities for extensive input from native English speakers, and the findings from my research indicate that those lecturers who teach the L2 switch between codes and even use the L1 in their interaction with students, thus further reducing input in the L2.

FIGURE 4: THE NUMBER OF LECTURING STAFF SPEAKING SISWATI L1 AND ENGLISH L2 IN SWAZILAND'S TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS



3.4.1.3 READING IN ACADEMIC ENGLISH

Coupled with 'talk about texts' is reading them in English in order to develop vocabulary. According to Corson (1997, p. 677) exposure to the specialist lexical items occurs more often while reading, more than while talking or watching television and that it is printed material that provides the most exposure to academic vocabulary.

The general trend by teachers of English in Swaziland is to encourage reading for pleasure to increase one's vocabulary and proficiency in English, yet Laufer (1992) and Gardner (2004) have shown that reading for pleasure has little chance of promoting the learning of words that are essential for academic pursuits. This means that reading has to be focused, and learners need to be fully engaged in activities that require them to attend carefully to the new words and

even to use them in productive tasks (Lightbown and Spada, 2006, p. 100). While 40.1% of students in the study appeared to be well-placed in households that had printed texts in English, only 2.4% had any written texts in siSwati. The findings reveal that students lacked the enthusiasm and motivation to read in either the L1 or L2, which could be attributed to the fact that the texts were not specifically geared towards children. It appears that these scenarios could affect them negatively in their attempts to acquire and develop appropriate vocabulary in academic meaning systems.

Further, while conversation and reading in academic meaning systems could boost learners vocabulary, Corson (1997, p. 698) argues that L2 students of Academic English might still struggle if they have infrequent encounters with specialized vocabulary and if they do not get adequate, transparent explanations of the morphological and semantic relationship between L1 and L2 lexical items. This would in turn hinder active participation in the academic meaning systems.

3.4.1.4 CONCORDANCING

Thurstun and Candlin (1998) argue that concordancing (which is teaching grammar in context) can introduce students unfamiliar with the language of academic discourse to some of the most important, frequent and significant items of the vocabulary of Academic English.

Concordancing is not discipline specific and its vocabulary is drawn from a large corpus of authentic language use across texts of various disciplines (Thurstun & Candlin, 1998, p. 268). Concordancing is not based on prescriptive rules and explanations but exposes learners to multiple examples of lexical items and their collocation relationships thereby helping them to discover authentic language use (Thurstun & Candlin, 1998) by exposing them to a wide range of academic vocabulary encouraging them to realize its rhetorical functions. In this way, learners can develop the ability to deduce the meaning of a word from the context in which it is used, develop insights into the collocations and grammatical structures with which the key words are associated and finally develop their writing competence (Thurstun & Candlin, 1998, p. 271).

According to Bush, Cadman, de Lacey, Simmons and Thurstun. (1996), concordancing can be exhausting if it is overused but I would argue that it is nevertheless a useful innovation that

could help tertiary students in Swaziland improve their skills in Academic English. However, bearing in mind the unavailability of facilities to collect corpus data and the lack of professional personnel to train the teachers who would in turn train the learners, concordancing could pose a challenge (Marope, 2010; MoET, 2013) unless, of course, Swaziland uses the materials piloted in Australia, Canada and Spain (Thurstun & Candlin, 1998).

3.5 PREVIOUS STUDIES ON ACADEMIC ENGLISH

An L2 person with a high level of L2 proficiency is able to use English with fluency and sophistication at a level approaching that of a native speaker in all the language domains. However, research has shown that Academic English proficiency, especially at tertiary level, is a universal problem both in the inner, outer, and expanding circles (Arua, 1998; Chimbanga, 2011; Kamwangamalu, 1994; Lillies, 2001; Nga, 2009; Qiang & Wolff, 2003; Scarcella, 2003). The inner circle refers to those countries where English is spoken as an L1 such as Britain, the United States of America, New Zealand, Canada and Australia. These are the countries that claim ownership of English and provide the norms of the language (Canagarajah & Said, 2010). Countries such as Swaziland, Malawi, Lesotho and Botswana that have a colonial past and have well-known varieties of English as an L2 constitute the outer circle. Canagarajah and Said (2010) refer to them as norm-developing countries and the expanding circle are those countries where English is used as a foreign language and are norm dependent. Irrespective of the circle where English could be categorized, according to Zwiers (2006, p. 318):

Academic language embodies cognitive, linguistic, cultural, and discipline specific features of discourse found in school and beyond – in scientific, business, and other technical areas [and] this is a double challenge for many students who are learning not only another language but also an academic dialect of that language.

3.5.1 ACADEMIC ENGLISH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

A case study by Webb (2002) on the use of English as an L2 in South African tertiary institutions conducted at the University of Pretoria revealed that while a significant portion of the student body prefer English as the language of learning and teaching, samples of L2 spoken and written work in English reveal that these students do not have the expected proficiency in the language of learning and teaching, which, in the case of the University of Pretoria, is English. The study revealed that some students at the university (both undergraduates and postgraduates) produced spoken and written responses marred by an inability to express ideas in a comprehensive format, a restricted or skewed knowledge of English vocabulary,

grammatical errors, poor spelling, punctuation errors, incorrect capitalization, and generally, slovenly writing (Webb, 2002).

The language problem in Pretoria is compounded by the fact that the majority of the teaching staff is Afrikaans-speaking: in 1999, 81.9% of the university's academic staff members were Afrikaans speaking, or preferred Afrikaans. A sizeable number of these staff members are reportedly not proficient enough in English to teach effectively through it (Webb, 2002, p. 50).

In a study investigating the success of the Supplemental Instruction programme aimed at addressing issues of equity and access to higher education by students from disadvantaged backgrounds in South Africa, Zulu (2003) concedes that universities in South Africa are faced with many problems among which is the problem of having students who are linguistically and academically underprepared. This is a common feature in historically black universities as opposed to the historically white ones.

According to Zulu (2003), at the University of North West in South Africa, for instance, the majority of the student population is underprepared for tertiary education. Their underpreparedness is evidenced by their inadequate proficiency in English and the low pass rates at first year. Even when these students are provided with additional instruction to assist them in constructing knowledge (Zulu, 2003, p. 54) the end of semester results show that they are still 'at-risk students' with generally inadequate high school preparation in English language, reading and writing skills. Weak students whose first language is not English find it difficult to engage in discussions where they have to use English to understand and explain legal concepts (Zulu, 2003, p. 59) and are unable to verbally articulate their ideas in Academic English which is the required linguistic code for tertiary education in South Africa. She therefore recommended that in courses with a large number of students more instructors should be employed at a ratio of 1:20 because a larger ratio of students to instructors resulted in "students who could not read, take lecture notes, write or study" (Arendale 1994, p. 14).

Zulu's (2003) findings seem to uncover a number of barriers and confirm the challenges that must be addressed to meet the needs of Academic English proficiency in higher education, not only in South African historically black universities but in higher education in general.

In Botswana, a study conducted by Chimbanga (2011) among first year students revealed that students whose L1 was predominantly Setswana manifested low proficiency levels in Academic English. This was evident in both their written and spoken discourse. In Swaziland, independent sociolinguistic studies conducted by Arua (1998), Kamwangamalu (1994, 1996), Kamwangamalu and Chisanga (1996) and De Koning (2009), on the English used in that country, identified colloquial forms apparent in the writings of journalists in the print media and in that of the students at the University of Swaziland. They described these forms as a variety of English and referred to them as “Swazi Colloquial English” (Kamwangamalu & Chisanga, 1996, p. 291). The forms exhibited stable but peculiar forms of language use. I perceive that the colloquial forms of English in the ‘variety’ they established which I have also found in my study can only be considered as deviations, deteriorating standards of, or low proficiency levels in, Academic English discourse. In my study, I examine these divergences in the light of the imperatives of the norms of Academic English and establish that, apart from other socio-cultural and economic factors, the students’ practices are often influenced by their L1, siSwati. Although I do not question the need for linguistic norms, critical to this debate is self-reflection: my (and other academics’) desire to label students’ English as deviant must also be confronted and interrogated: is it helpful to indulge in such narratives and why do we do it? Would we not learn more, and thus help our students more productively, if we devised strategies to engage learners more robustly and meaningfully in academic discourses, rather than alienating them further from the L2 by labelling them as incompetent in it?

Incompetency is evident in lecturers’ own L2 discourses in Swaziland where almost all the lecturers singled out for the current study are L1 speakers of siSwati. In a fairly recent study on the teaching of English as an L2 in China, Qiang and Wolff (2003, p. 32) doubted the effectiveness of ESL (English Second Language) teachers without immersion in or exposure to ESL culture, and revealed that they often reproduced un-English pronunciations and were even unable to correct mistakes made by students as they could not recognize them. The same sentiments are shared by Olsson and Sheridan (2012) who conducted research on the English language issue in tertiary institutions in Sweden; and Webb (2002) in South Africa. These scholars agree in general that students and some teaching staff are not proficient enough in English, and this has created a barrier in their academic development. According to Webb (2002, p. 53):

Students (and teaching staff) who do not use language effectively, whether linguistically or professionally, are intuitively evaluated as inadequately equipped for (eventual) professional practice.

Given that Academic English is fundamental in academia and the workplace, the inquiry is: Why can students not acquire it? What effect do L1s have on the acquisition of Academic English by both staff and students? In the case of tertiary education in Swaziland, I seek to establish the likely effect of the siSwati of the students and their lecturers' siSwati on their acquisition of Academic English: Could the English language problems be emanating from the influence of both the teaching staff and the students' L1s and is this also an issue of the difference of cultural discursive practices?

Educational policies and practices and support programmes in Southern African universities have tried to address the problem of Academic English without much success. Similarly, a study by Nunan (2003) on the impact of language policies and practices in the Asia Pacific Region showed that they were failing, even though government policies in these areas dictate that English language teaching be introduced very early in a child's school life. Recruiting L1 speakers of English to teach English in Asia did also not result in success because the recruits were not trained teachers. Practices such as supplemental instruction (an English language instruction that facilitates students' study at tertiary level by trying to develop their proficiency in English, enhancing their understanding of content in discipline specific areas and providing and overall platform for students' academic development) at the University of the North West have equally failed as there has not been any improvement in learners' achievements whether they had this extra instruction or not.

It is curious that scholarly and pedagogical work in Swaziland has generally not investigated, or has neglected to examine, the influence of students' siSwati as their L1 on the learning of Academic English. Most of the research into first years' linguistic behaviour outside the country (Chimbganda, 2011; Lillies, 2001) has been on the study and use of English by students as they transitioned from school to university, but the literacy practices of the L1 and an examination of how its linguistic structure might impact on the acquisition of the L2 has largely been ignored as an area of study. It is this dearth of research into the link between the L1 and the problems encountered in the L2 that has thus necessitated this study.

3.5.2 ACADEMIC ENGLISH IN OTHER NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING COUNTRIES

In Hong Kong the expansion of higher education since the mid-1980s was accompanied by growing concern among academics and administrators about the difficulties experienced by L1 Cantonese-speaking undergraduates when they studied academic subjects through the medium of English. Evan and Morrison (2011) conducted a longitudinal study that examined the adjustments of first years to the demands of English medium in higher education. They found that at Hong Kong's largest English-medium university, students experienced problems with understanding technical vocabulary, comprehending and writing academic texts and conforming to the university culture.

These problems seemed to stem from students' often limited competence and confidence in English (Andrade, 2009). For these students the official medium of instruction and assessment was academic English and this type of English differed from the usual language of out-of-class communication on campus and of everyday life in society at large (Evans & Morrison, 2011, p. 200). According to them, the difficulties students experienced in this medium was aggravated by classroom language practices because instructors often used Cantonese when employing English language instructional material in lectures, seminars and tutorials. Even though they experienced these factors that militated against them acquiring academic English, students in Hong Kong managed to succeed by sheer determination, diligence, strong motivation, supportive peer networks and the deployment of effective learning strategies (Evans & Morrison, 2011, p. 189). The study has important implications for the Swaziland situation: are we concentrating too much on what is wrong and ignoring what interventions would increase motivation and the employment of "effective learning strategies"?

A survey (Olsson & Sheridan, 2012) of academic staff's perception of the use of English (including publishing in journals) at a Swedish university did not only suggest that English enjoyed more authority than Swedish, but also revealed that staff felt more comfortable in Swedish, even in academic contexts.

The research results of these international studies show that even in well-resourced, developed countries students and lecturers struggle to attain optimal proficiencies in Academic English. The problem is further exacerbated in a country like Swaziland where the average Swazi child will be more distant from Academic English than that of a Swedish child, given the fact that

written texts will be more prolific in a Swedish household than a Swazi household. Also, of course, Swedish, like English, is a Germanic language, whereas siSwati is not related to English. In this study I hope to investigate the specific problems affecting a siSwati L1 student's acquisition of Academic English within the context of global studies and research.

3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have examined Academic English and its proficiency levels in different academic contexts and have concluded that this is a global problem. Tertiary students in universities and higher education institutions are generally not proficient enough in Academic English to conduct discourses that will lead to academic and employment success. I have also reviewed the different frameworks that guide Academic English. Thurstun and Candlin (1998) view it as an academic meaning system which is shaped by the culture of literacy which is rooted in Graeco-Latin vocabulary. Active participation in literacy culture and its discursive practices entails one's ability to understand and use its diverse vocabulary. A learner can have access to the vocabulary if s/he is exposed to it not only in literary printed texts but also in talk about texts and has motivated opportunities outside the classroom environment to use it. Concordancing, which exposes learners to grammar-in-context through a variety of activities of authentic language use assists students in developing not only their vocabularies but also helps them in moulding their writing, speaking, comprehension and reading skills.

The frameworks by Corson (1997), Cummins (1981, 1984, 2000), Scarcella (2003), and Thurstun and Candlin (1998) have helped unravel the aspects of language that learners need in order to acquire Academic English. Using these important studies as guidelines, in this study I hope to establish the Academic English proficiency levels of higher education students in Swaziland and conduct an empirical investigation into the effect of L1 siSwati on the acquisition of this genre of English.

While the guiding question for this current study focuses on the influence of L1 siSwati on the learning of Academic English, I also hope, in this study, to give a description of the siSwati language and discuss possible areas of its grammar, syntax and semantics that could inhibit or facilitate L2 acquisition. This and previous studies on an L1 influence on an L2 are the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: A DISCUSSION OF THE SIKWATI LANGUAGE, ITS GRAMMAR, SEMANTICS AND RELEVANCE TO THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT IN SWAZILAND

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Using the frameworks provided by Corson (1997) and Scarcella (2003), in Chapter 3, I deliberated on the concept of Academic English. An examination of studies on Academic English in other tertiary institutions in and outside Africa showed that students in higher education establishments have a challenge mastering this variety of English and this challenge hinders their academic goals. In this chapter, I discuss the siSwati language and look at its relevance to the educational context in Swaziland. I have divided this chapter into four focal parts.

I begin with a linguistic classification of the siSwati language in relation to other Nguni languages in sub-Saharan Africa. This is followed by an outline of the variants of the language that are manifested in the four regions of Swaziland.

In the second part I situate the teaching and learning of siSwati and Academic English within the context of Swaziland. This is done in order to show how each of the two official languages are weighted in the education system of the country.

Research has shown that competencies acquired in an L1 are transferred to the L2 (Cummins, 1984; Eisterhold, 1990; Friedlander, 1990; Gass & Selinker, 1994; Krapels, 1990; Nomlomo, 2004). Empirical evidence from studies that have examined the influence of an L1 on the learning of the L2 has helped lay the groundwork for my investigation on the extent to which students' language history and competencies in siSwati influence their ability to acquire Academic English.

At the end of the chapter, I discuss the siSwati language by examining its grammar, semantics and discourse patterns in an effort to show the structural and pragmatic features of this language that are susceptible to cross-linguistic transfer. It is hoped that comprehensive discussions of siSwati structure and Academic English respectively in the educational context of Swaziland will bring to light the competencies that may facilitate or inhibit SLA.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHY OF SWAZILAND

Swaziland is a small landlocked country located in the south-eastern part of Africa between Mozambique and South Africa. It lies between 26° 30' south of the Equator and 31° 30' east of the Greenwich Line. On its eastern side it shares a border with Mozambique and the rest of the country is surrounded by South Africa. Swaziland has a landmass of somewhat over 17, 000 km².

Swaziland is a kingdom and its people are united under a diarchy (a king and a queen) (Mzizi, 2000, p. 912). It is largely a monocultural nation that has two official languages: siSwati and English. SiSwati is the indigenous language of the Swazi people, and English, which occupies a more elevated status, is used as a medium of instruction in secondary and higher education and in many official domains. According to Sithebe (2011), about 80% of the population above fifteen years of age understand and speak English with differing levels of ability and 90% of the African population in Swaziland speak siSwati as an L1. According to the World Bank database (2011) the literacy rate of the youth (ages 15 – 24) is 93.74%.

Swaziland was never colonized as such but was a British protectorate (Kamwangamalu & Moyo, 2003). When it attained its independence in 1968, it inherited both the administrative infrastructure set up by the British during the colonial era and the English language through which Britain had ruled it (Kamwangamalu & Chisanga, 1996, p. 285).

According to Marope (2010, p. 4) and MoET (2013, p. 1), the Swaziland's Human Development Index (HDI) has declined significantly as a result of the low life expectancy at birth due mainly, but not solely, to HIV/AIDS, and the low combined Gross Enrolment Ratio GER for primary, secondary and tertiary education. According to the 2007 census the population of Swaziland stands at 1,005,206 people (Zwane, 2010). Of the total population, 97% are African and 3% are of European origin (Sithebe, 2011). 79%¹⁰ of the population live in the rural areas (MoET, 2013, p. 1), and according to Balarin (n.d.) 24% is urban with an urbanization rate of 30%. My research shows the majority of students in the surveyed institutions are from rural areas (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1).

¹⁰ The exact percentage is contentious as Balarin (n.d.) believes it is 76% of the population that is rural.

FIGURE 5: MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF SWAZILAND



Of note is that while Swaziland is classified as a middle income country, income distribution is uneven (MoET, 2013, p. 1) as “69% of the population lives below the poverty line, and 37% live in extreme poverty” (Bandora, 2009, p. 16).

The economic downturn has affected all sectors of the country, and the education sector has been particularly hard hit. While the Swaziland government budget for the 2013/2014 financial year allocated the Ministry of Education and Training a significantly larger budget share than any other ministry, it was insufficient to keep pace with inflation, the increase in total enrolments, and the demand for teachers and infrastructure (MoET, 2013, p. 3; MoET, 2011).

4.3 LINGUISTIC CLASSIFICATION OF SIWATI

SiSwati forms part of the Nguni group of the Southern Bantu family of African languages. According to Taljaard et al., (1991), the Nguni group is further subdivided into the Zunda and Tekela groups, and languages in these groupings tend to be mutually intelligible. The Zunda group comprises isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, whilst the Tekela group comprises the siSwati of Swaziland and that of kaNgwane, isiSumayela, isiLala, isiNhlangwini, isiPhuthi and isiBhaca. According to Taljaard et al. (1991, p. 1), of these ‘dialects’ siSwati is the only one that has attained recognition as a language in its own right. According to Gowlett (2003, p. 610), “[isi]Phuthi and [isi]Lala are highly threatened language varieties, and are already showing signs of ‘disease’.”

4.4 LINGUISTIC FUNCTION AND STATUS OF SIWATI.

In South Africa siSwati is recognized as one of the eleven official languages and is concentrated in Mpumalanga and some parts of the Gauteng province. According to the MoET (2009, 2011) and the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland (2005), siSwati has joint status with English as they are both regarded as official languages of Swaziland. In the education system, the MoET, (2011) dictates that siSwati is the medium of instruction for preschool as well as the first four grades of school. SiSwati is also a compulsory subject in primary and secondary schools. The Policy directive is that:

All children going through the school system in Swaziland are expected to learn siSwati. Therefore siSwati will continue to be taught as a subject at all grade levels in the school system. SiSwati as a subject remains a core subject in all schools and at all grade levels. As a way to promote the learning of siSwati in all schools, children shall not be punished for speaking siSwati within and outside school premises. (MoET, 2011, p. 27).

In some schools, however, French is offered as an alternative subject to siSwati and most preschools, particularly those privately owned, use English as a medium of instruction.

SiSwati is also used in all the media houses in Swaziland, although, according to a telephone interview to the media house (16 September, 2014) circulation of the siSwati version of *The Times of Swaziland* has been terminated due to poor readership. On the national radio, siSwati is used continuously by Channel 1 of the Swaziland Broadcasting and Information service (SBIS). Channel 1 is a siSwati-only frequency and Channel 2 is the English-only frequency.

On the national television station, siSwati shares broadcasting times with English. According to the Swaziland Television Authority (STA) schedule (2014), while English is used 79.95% of the time; siSwati trails behind at 20.05%.

In Swaziland siSwati is a national identity language and the L1 of the majority of the population, while English is a tool for economic survival and global communication.

4.5 DIALECTAL VARIANTS OF SI SWATI

In and outside Swaziland, the divergences in speech within the whole siSwati realm are quite pronounced (Ziervogel & Mabuza 1976, p. v-vi). Rooted within the siSwati spoken in Swaziland are four dialectal forms each corresponding to the four administrative regions of the country: Hhohho, Shiselweni, Manzini, and Lubombo.

The Hhohho variety is spoken mainly in the north, centre, and southwest of the country, especially around royal kraals, Nkhanini and the Lobamba. This is the dialect termed “the speech of the ... Dlamini” (Ziervogel & Mabuza 1976, p. xx). This is the dialect that is considered standard as a result of its association with the royal household. It has been codified and is taught in schools both in Swaziland and the Mpumalanga province in South Africa.

In the south (the Shiselweni region), a Zunda/Thithiza dialect is spoken by about 65% of the people. This dialect bears a strong resemblance to isiZulu. For instance, it employs the isiZulu sounds [th], [t] and [z] in distributions where the other dialects exhibit [ts], [dz] and [t] as shown in Example 1 below (Ziervogel, 1952).

(1)

Standard siSwati	Shiselweni dialect	Gloss
tsandza [tshandza]	thanda [thanda]	‘like/love’
dzabula [dzaɓula]	dabula [taɓula]	‘tear’
tama [tama] or [t’ama]	zama [zama]	‘try’

The examples in (1) above are an illustration of the phonemes [ts], [ndz], [dz], and [t] in Standard siSwati and [th], [nd], [t], and [z] found in the Shiselweni dialect.

The Shiselweni dialect is a mixture of both isiZulu and siSwati and is spoken around Hlatikulu, Nhlangano, Mhlosheni, Lavumisa and Mahamba. It can be considered to have arisen because of isiZulu influence in neighbouring South Africa.

Historically, the Swazi people trace their geneses to the Pongola river valley in what is present-day KwaZulu-Natal, from where they migrated to Swaziland (Johnston, 2012). A small group became established in the Shiselweni region while others migrated as far as Mpumalanga. Furthermore, since independence, Swaziland has remained dependent on the South African economy, and many Swazis live and work in South Africa. In addition, apart from other factors such as high mobility which is enhanced by geographical closeness to towns such as Piet Retief, Pongola and Ermelo, migrant labour and intermarriages between the Zulus and Swazis, most of the people from the Southern part of Swaziland are exposed to isiZulu radio stations particularly Ukhozi, and the South African Television channels; SABC 1 and etv, hence it is no surprise that their siSwati is influenced by isiZulu. SiSwati speakers consider this variety non-standard and it has inferior connotations amongst certain sectors of the population.

The people who live in the eastern part of the Manzini region speak the Ndwandwe dialect; this dialect differs considerably from the western portion of the region which speaks standard siSwati. The speakers of this dialect tend to pronounce the letter /l/ as /y/. For instance, [lala] ‘sleep’ becomes [jaja].

Finally anecdotal evidence indicates that the Lomahasha dialect is spoken in the Lubombo region in the eastern part of the country. This is a dialect that is heavily influenced by some of the languages of Mozambique spoken around its borders with Swaziland.

FIGURE 6: DIALECT AREAS OF SWAZILAND



The four varieties discussed above can be reduced to mainly two strains of the siSwati language – the standard or prestigious one spoken in the centre and north of Swaziland and the less prestigious ones spoken in the south and eastern parts of the country (Johnston, 2012).

Some students in tertiary institutions in Swaziland are products of communities that speak the different sub-standard varieties as their L1. When most of them arrive at tertiary institutions they start adopting the standard dialect spoken mainly in the Hhohho and Manzini regions as the other varieties are not only considered ‘not proper’ siSwati, but as Chambers (2009, p. 222) argues:

People who move from one dialect region to another often find themselves subjected to ridicule because of their [dialects], and the social purpose of the ridicule is to goad them into adapting as far as possible to local norms.

These students, in their quest to identify with the discourse patterns in their new academic community, tend to mix both the prestigious and the non-prestigious varieties which at times results in a variety which is distinctly non-standard.

4.6 SWITCH TO ENGLISH AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Apart from issue of dialects, there has been a growing tendency among speakers of siSwati (of all the varieties) to replace their L1 varieties with English or switch between codes in social and even academic settings. Some parents even speak to their children in English at home and enrol them in English-medium preschools with the hope that their children's learning of English as an L2 will be accelerated. The growing popularity of English is, to a certain degree, threatening the siSwati language, because as a result, the younger generation in all four regions of the country has acquired a non-standard variety of siSwati either at home or at school

According to Desai (2010); Heugh (2013); Nomlomo (2010); Saville-Troike (1984), and Yazici et al. (2010), children learn better in the L2 if they have a higher level of L1 competence. If they have acquired a wide and rich vocabulary in their mother tongue when they start school, the easier it will be to learn reading and writing skills in the school language. It is, however, not clear whether Swazi learners have a level of L1 competence that enables them to benefit fully from an education that is conducted in the medium of the L2.

4.7 THE CONTEXT OF ENGLISH AND SI SWATI IN SWAZILAND

4.7.1. EDUCATION

Education in Swaziland is provided by both the private and the public sector. Structurally learners between the ages of three to six years spend two to three years at preschool. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) policy goal is to prioritize the expansion of equitable access to early learning to accommodate all children in Swaziland aged three to six years (MoET, 2011, p. 30). Preschool education is largely offered by private individuals, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and faith-based organizations, communities, neighbourhood care points (NPCs) and KaGogo centres¹¹ (Marope, 2010, p. 3). These different organizations employ unqualified teachers as there are no pre-service training (PRESET) courses available through which they could become qualified. There is only very little in the

¹¹ NPCs and KaGogo centres are care points for orphaned and vulnerable children. They emerged as part of the response to HIV/AIDS and are modelled after the traditional grandparents' place as neutral places of refuge where children can confide. They are innovative institutions that offer some elements of ECCD – (Marope, 2010, p.17).

way of in-service training (INSET) and there is an acute lack of resource inputs. According to MoET (2013, p. x & 5) the provision of ECCE has proceeded without operational guidelines, no published curriculum and no standards to guide curricula. The medium of instruction at the preschool level of a child's education is supposed to be siSwati. As the results show, this instruction exists only in name, because although fewer than 40% of children are enrolled in ECCE (MoET, 2013), there are preschools of which the medium of instruction is English.

Learners aged six to thirteen years spend seven years in primary school education (Grades 1 to 7). The major challenge facing the primary education sub-sector is the poor quality education in rural areas as over 25% of primary school teachers are still unqualified (MoET, 2013, p. xi).

Fourteen-to sixteen-year-olds spend three years in secondary education and seventeen-to nineteen-year-olds spend two years in high school education. According to MoET (2013, p. xi), the challenges facing secondary/high school education relating to the quality of this sub-sector education is the lack of standards and clear operational definition of outputs at each level in terms of key competencies and skills to be acquired.

Curricula do not clearly characterize the nature of output from each phase in terms of knowledge, skills and competences to be acquired. [As such] completion rates are low... (MoET, 2013, p. xi).

Learners who are nineteen years old and above spend between three and seven years in tertiary education, training for various professions, the most popular being the teaching profession (MoET, 2013, p. 19).

The MoET (2011, p. 28) document dictates that all education from Grades 1 to 4 should be instructed in siSwati and from Grades 5 to 12 in English except for the siSwati classes.

4.7.2 LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY

According to The Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland (2005) and MoET (2011), siSwati and English share equal status in the country as both are official languages. In reality, however, English enjoys an elevated status compared to siSwati: in the classrooms English has more teaching time than siSwati and in some educational institutions siSwati is not compulsory but is an elective alongside French, Portuguese and other languages (MoET, 2011).

4.7.3 CONTEXT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SWAZILAND

Generally a learner has seven, three and two years of primary, secondary and senior secondary schooling, respectively, in the general education and training (GET) system of Swaziland

(Marope, 2010, p. 25). MoET dictates that English is the medium of instruction for all school subjects (except the SiSwati class) in all schools in Swaziland from Grade 5 upwards. According to the MoET (2011), for the first four years of their education, learners should be taught in their L1 and English is to be introduced from Grade 4 upwards. Contrary to what policy dictates, however, some schools, particularly those in urban areas and private schools, introduce learners to English as early as preschool and it is these children who come to the classroom already conversant in English (Mkhonza, 2011, p. 3).

At Grade 7, the last grade of their primary school education, learners sit the Swaziland Primary Certificate (SPC) examination. It is a successful pass in this examination, particularly in English, that qualifies learners for admission to secondary schools. Even if one had to fail siSwati, one would still pass the SPC, whereas a fail in English would exclude one from continuing to secondary school.

At secondary school (Grades 8-12) English serves as both the medium of instruction and general communication. At this level all subjects (except SiSwati in schools that offer it) are taught in English and learners are expected to do all activities in English. Until 2011,¹² learners were compelled to converse in English among themselves and their teachers during school hours and within the school premises.¹³ They write compositions and answer comprehension questions in English and learn Academic English from standard texts prepared by language educators at the Swaziland National Curriculum Centre (NCC). At the end of the secondary school level, they write the Junior Certificate (JC) examination administered by the Swaziland and Lesotho Examination Syndicate. In the English paper, learners are assessed on their writing, comprehension, reading, listening skills. The Junior Certificate Syllabus for Examination in October/November 2012 – 2014 emphasizes that learners should achieve:

communicative rather than purely linguistic competence. This is because learners need to be able to communicate in English in the real world, rather than to analyse it for its own sake (The Examination Council of Swaziland, 2012, p. 5).

In the siSwati paper students are assessed mainly on grammar and siSwati language use. A pass in English and any other five subjects in the Junior Certificate examination qualify learners for admission to high schools. However, no matter how good a pass maybe in siSwati, it does not qualify a learner for high school admission if the learner has failed English.

¹² See the discussion of the medium of instruction in Swaziland's schools in the MoET (2011, p. 27)

¹³ Their attestation that they speak English to their teachers in the results is witness to this.

At the high school level (Grades 11-12), learners write the Swaziland General Certificate of Secondary Education examination to qualify for entry to institutions of higher learning. This examination is a local examination adapted from the International General Certificate of Secondary Education examination to suit the context of a Swazi child. It is accredited by the Cambridge International Examinations (www.cie.org.uk). The English language syllabus stresses that the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and comprehension, should be an integral part of English teaching because these are the skills that promote language competence (ECOS, 2013a, p. 4). The examination paper of the Swaziland General Certificate of Secondary Education English inevitably assesses learners on these four language skills and on the writing skill in particular, since learners are expected to write a composition in impeccable Academic English.

The siSwati syllabus stresses the development of competence in the use of the siSwati language and an understanding of siSwati literature and culture (ECOS, 2013b, p. 4) and likewise the siSwati examination paper, which is in line with the syllabus, assesses competence in the use of the siSwati language and an understanding of siSwati literature and culture. In the Swaziland General Certificate of Secondary Education siSwati paper, learners are free to answer questions in either of the official languages and instructions in the siSwati examination paper are in both official languages.

At university level:

The normal minimum requirement for entrance to degree programmes shall be six passes in IGCSE/SGCSE/GCE O'Level, which must include passes at C grade or better in English Language....Alternatively, a Cambridge Overseas School Certificate ...with a Credit in English Language (University of Swaziland, 2012, p. 45)

At the Swaziland College of Technology, in addition to the credits in the subjects relevant to the career a student wants to pursue, s/he should also have a pass in English Language. The same is true of Ngwane Teachers' College and the Southern Africa Nazarene University. At William Pitcher Teachers' College a credit in English Language is also an entry requirement for the Secondary Teachers' Diploma.

Further, at university level and all the tertiary institutions of Swaziland, English is the medium of instruction and all courses are taught and assessed in it. Disturbing to all stakeholders in Swaziland is not only the high rate of failure in the English Language paper at the school leaving examination but the substandard discourse with which those that have passed and made

it to higher education communicate. Table 3 (Figure 7) below shows the pass and failure rate in English Language and siSwati in the last five years in the school leaving examination and for ease of reference these are represented in Figures 8 and 9 below.

FIGURE 7:TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF RESULTS IN SGCSE/IGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND SISWATI L1

ENGLISH			SISWATI		
Year	Symbol C and above	Symbol D to G	Year	Symbol C and above	Symbol D to G
2009	26.10%	63.46%	2009	66.39%	33.10%
2010	24.98%	64.50%	2010	66.23%	33.58%
2011	26.82%	62.49%	2011	65.42%	34.50%
2012	24.06%	66.20%	2012	66.61%	33.24%
2013	23.36%	66.54%	2013	65.45%	34.24%

FIGURE 8: PASS/FAILURE RATE IN SGCSE/IGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND SISWATI L1

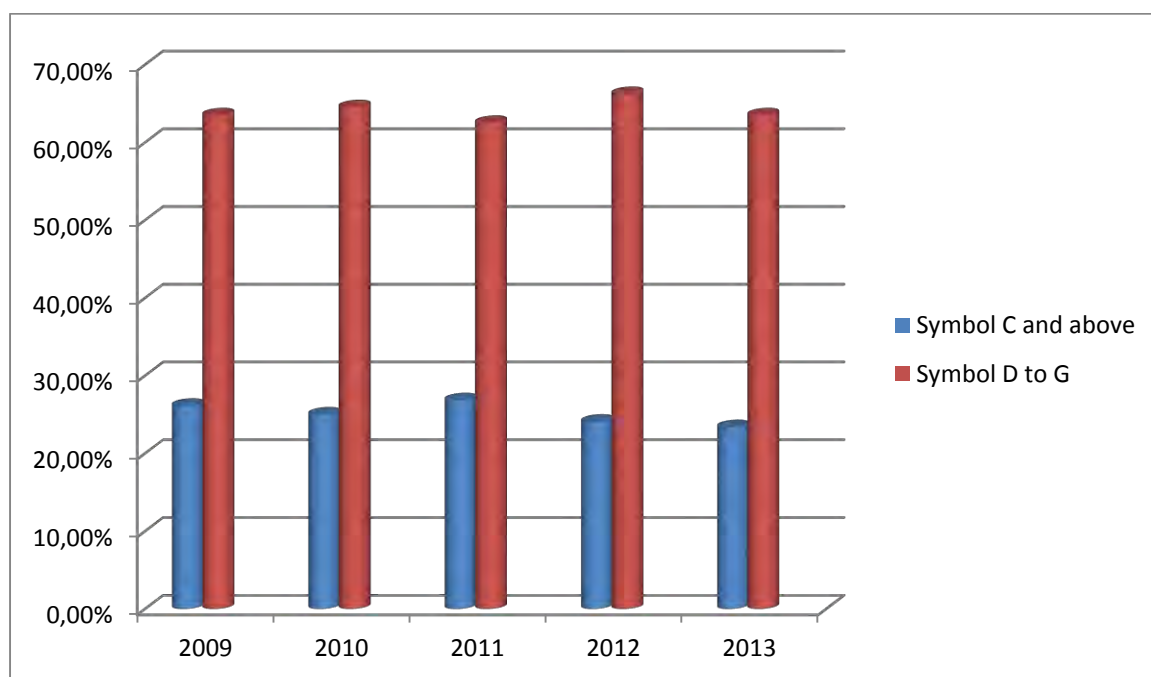
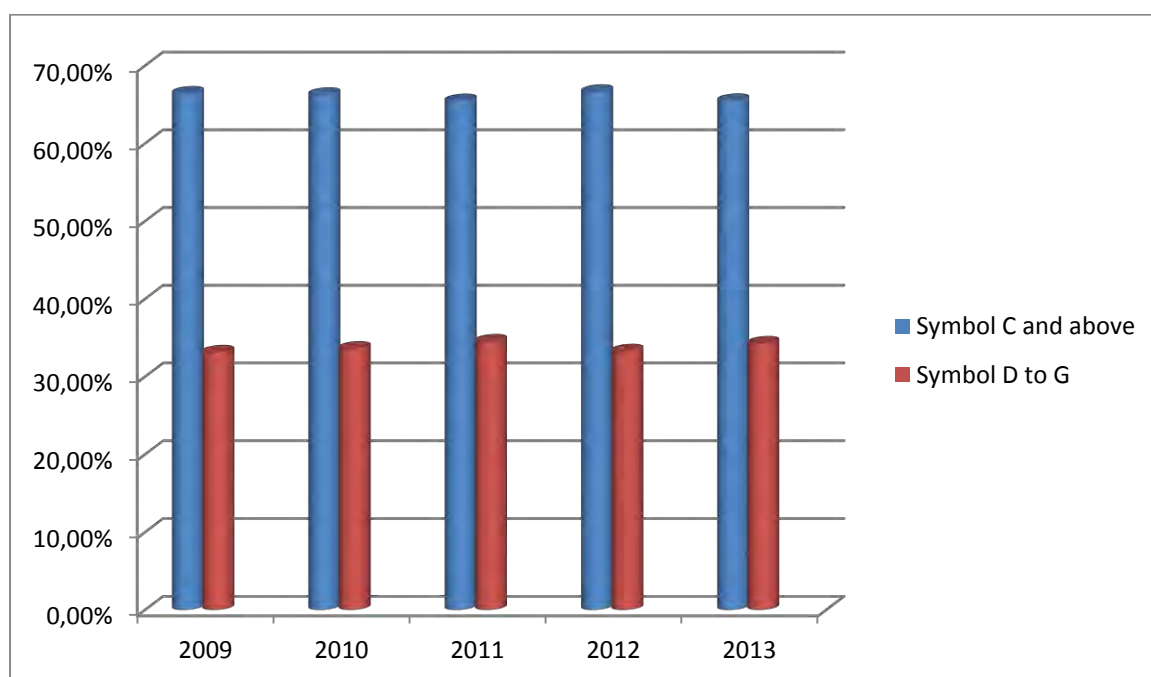


FIGURE 9: PASS/FAILURE RATE IN SGCSE/IGCSE SISWATI OVER A PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS



An analysis of these statistics would suggest that students' high pass rate in siSwati is as a result of their engagement with, understanding of, and mastery in, all aspects of their L1 but this does not seem to translate into success in their L2, English. Leading proponents of mother-tongue instruction in South Africa (i.e. Desai, 2010; Heugh, 2013; Nomlomo, 2010) argue that if the L1 is properly taught, students should have sufficient cognitive abilities not only to master the L2, but to do better in their other content subjects as well. The problem is that learners are only taught in the medium of siSwati for four grades, and the critical question thus is: are learners learning their L1 sufficiently well, not only as a content subject, but as medium of instruction, to allow them to succeed in high levels of acquisition of the L2? This important question of L1 instruction requires further investigation and while it will not be qualitatively or quantitatively researched for this study, which focusses on how siSwati as an L1 can negatively impact students' acquisition of Academic English, I do need to refer to it as a critical and influential background concern.

From the account in 4.7.2 above, it is evident that the siSwati language is not accorded much importance in the education system of the country. Ironically, in institutions of learning where appreciations of the L1 ought to be cultivated, the learners are encouraged to master English and until recently were punished for speaking their L1 during school hours.

Furthermore, while siSwati is not taught in some schools, in others it is an optional subject, alternative to French (Balarin, n.d.; Clayton, 2008). At tertiary level, siSwati is not even used as a medium of instruction in SiSwati courses as the courses are taught in English. Even a credit or pass in SiSwati does not qualify a learner for tertiary education as it is not an entry requirement for higher education, unless a learner wants to major in SiSwati or do courses that require it. The Limkokwing University of Technology in Mbabane, for example, rules out SiSwati as a subject to be considered for admission in their institution. This does not only reveal how SiSwati is strategically being side-lined, it also shows that Swazis are complicit in relegating their own L1 to an inferior position in society – what one journalist referred to as a “strategic and well calculated slaughter” (*The Swazi Observer*, 2014: February 24).

With so much exposure and attention to English, not to mention its high global status, one would expect that learners in Swaziland would be proficient in this language by the time they enrol for tertiary education. On the contrary, the reverse is true. In her report of a study into Junior Certificate writing lessons, Mkhonza (2011, p. 11) discovered that learners used a localized form of English, a low status variety which was reproduced in the teacher training

process and which was different from the Academic English expected at tertiary level. This form of English is characterized by L1 structures which seem to have been transferred to their L2.

From the foregoing discussion it can thus be concluded that siSwati is not encouraged by academic institutions as it is not considered to have academic currency. Students are clearly aware of this but nevertheless are brought up using siSwati to operate certain cognitive functions which they have to transfer to English. In addition to the fact that Swazi students lack cognitive development in the L1, this study will provide parallel data of language immaturity from an additional perspective: that of the influence of the L1 on the acquisition of a particular variety of the L2 (Academic English). Thus, drawing on data analyses conducted by local researchers (Mkhonza, 2011; Sithebe, 2011) as well as international ones (Arua, 1998; Cummins, 1981, 1984, 2000; Kamwangamalu, 1996; Kamwangamalu & Chisanga, 1996; Kamwangamalu & Moyo, 2003; McAllister et al., 2002; Paradis & Navarro, 2003; Ramirez et al., 2010) in this research study I aim to establish how the linguistic resources and discursive practices siSwati learners bring with them from their L1 affect their acquisition of English as L2.

4.8 PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON L1 INFLUENCE ON L2

In order to show the effects of the L1 on L2 acquisition it is crucial to consider international studies that have examined this process of language transfer and interference.

In a longitudinal study examining the English proficiency of Arabic-speaking students studying English as an L2, Scott and Tucker (1974) found that Arabic L1 interference was evident in the omission of the auxiliary and the copula and in their repetitions of subject and object noun phrases. For example, students tended to omit **is** or **are** after **there**¹⁴. This was attributed to L1 influence as these features are absent in Arabic.

Arabic-speaking students also tended to use the pronoun in addition to the actual noun phrases in main clauses. An example from Scott and Tucker (1974, pp. 89, 90) included:

(2) *Mubarak and Hamad, they are wanting to sail their boat.

¹⁴ I use bold when English words are referred to grammatically. When English words translate siSwati words that appear in the text, I use single quotes.

According to Scott and Tucker, the use of the pronoun that refers to the subject noun phrase is a consequence of L1 interference. When a verb agrees with its subject in number, gender and person in Arabic, another subject marker which is usually a pronoun is necessary.

Ramirez et al. (2010) investigated whether morphological awareness contributed to word reading in Spanish as well as English and if it transferred between Spanish and English, for Spanish children who are English language learners. They found that the differences between Spanish and English were an underlying factor. While Spanish is orthographically transparent, its morphological system is complex and its orthography has a near perfect correspondence between phonemes and letters. Contrary to Spanish, English has an opaque orthography, and the phonemes of English do not always correspond to their letters. The results of their study then revealed that cross-linguistic transfer was observable from Spanish to English but not vice versa, and the basis of the transfer was the differences between these languages.

The results also revealed that morphological awareness is important for word reading in Spanish and that its development in the Spanish children's L1 is associated with word reading in English, their L2. These results then confirm the hypothesis that knowledge gained in the process of acquiring one's L1 assists in the acquisition and development of the L2. In another study investigating the occurrence of cross-linguistic interference in the domain of subject realization in Spanish in a bilingual context, Paradis and Navarro (2003), found similar results. Using spontaneous data, the researchers examined the frequency of overt and null subjects as well as the discourse pragmatic context of overt subject use in Spanish by two Spanish monolinguals and one Spanish-English bilingual and their parent interlocutors. The results revealed that the bilingual child's realization patterns were consistent with that of the two monolinguals. This suggests that cross-linguistic influence was apparent in the bilingual child's language production since s/he showed patterns in his/her realization of the subject that could be interpreted as due to cross-linguistic effects from English.

McAllister et.al. (2002) examined the influence of the L1 phonological system on the acquisition of Swedish quantity distinction and discovered that quantity distinctions in English and Spanish are not phonologically relevant but in Estonian quantity is an important aspect of its phonology. The results showed that the Estonians fared better than the English in the acquisition of Swedish quantity distinctions and that the native English subjects were more successful than the native Spanish subjects. This is presumably because there is no length distinction in Spanish. Although my study does not examine the influence of the siSwati

phonological system on the acquisition of the English phonological system, McAllister et.al.'s study (2002) is nevertheless still significant in that it shows how similar features in two languages can aid acquisition.

Given that studies conducted reveal a strong L1 influence in the acquisition of L2 phonologies and grammars, it is thus expected that L1 siSwati will have an impact on the acquisition of Academic English by tertiary education students in Swaziland.

In the next section, I discuss some of the morphological systems, semantic, structural and pragmatic features of the siSwati language that are susceptible to cross-linguistic interference.

In the morphological domain of siSwati, I will pay particular attention to:

- a) The noun classification system;
- b) The system of concordial agreement;
- c) The agglutinating nature of the language.

In the syntactic domain I will focus on:

- a) The basic structure of the siSwati sentence;
- b) The use of the use of the passive;
- c) The auxiliary verbs.

The semantic domain will examine the meanings of individual lexical items and the pragmatic domain will examine the uses of the language. These will include:

- a) Question formation;
- b) Idiomatic expressions;
- c) The elaborate sentence structure;
- d) Culture, style and politeness patterns.

4.9 THE MORPHOLOGICAL SYSTEM

4.9.1 THE NOUN CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

According to Taljaard et al. (1991) the linguistic structure of siSwati is based on two principles: the system of the noun classes and the system of concords, while Doke (1954) and Buell (2005) note that Bantu languages employ a grammatical gender-class. The noun classification system of siSwati categorizes nouns into seventeen (17) classes although Sibanda and Mthembu (1996)

consolidate them into eight (8) by setting them to pairs such that a noun has a singular and a plural form in one class except for classes 14 to 17.

The noun classes are central in siSwati for two reasons. Firstly, they designate the categories to which different nouns could be assigned or belong. Secondly, they link the noun to other words in a sentence by means of a concordial morpheme which is derived from the noun prefix and usually bears close resemblance to the preprefix¹⁵ of nouns that have an initial vowel in their prefixes (Pretorius & Bosch, 2003). This means that through the linguistic knowledge of noun classes a speaker is able to link the appropriate noun to all pronouns, qualifying words, and predicates in a sentence by means of a concord (Doke, 1954; Pretorius & Bosch, 2003; Sibanda & Mthembu, 1996; Taljaard et al., 1991; Thwala, 1996).

The grammatical classes or categories of the nouns are determined by the prefixal morphemes of the noun. Each noun in a group/class begins with a specific syllable(s) and the rest of the word retains the original form. For example, according to Sibanda and Mthembu (1996) Class 1 in siSwati (with its plural in Class 2) is a human class and Class 9 (with its plural form in Class 10) is an animal class, as exemplified in (3) below:

(3) Class 1	<i>um-untfu</i> ‘a person’	Class 2	<i>ba-ntfu</i> ‘people’
	<i>um-fana</i> ‘a boy’		<i>ba-fana</i> ‘boys’
Class 9	<i>iN- khomo</i> ‘a cow’	Class 10	<i>tiN-khomo</i> ‘cows’
	<i>iN- bongolo</i> ‘a donkey’		<i>tiN-bongolo</i> ‘donkeys’

The capital letter /-N-/ in the classes 9 and 10 prefixes is an archiphoneme representing all the nasal sounds in that grouping. These include: /-n-/ , /-m-/ , /-ng-/ , /-nk-/ , /-mp-/ and /-ngg-/.

In the system of noun classes the stem of the word in that class retains the original form but the different class prefixes give different semantic contents to each noun (Taljaard et al., 1991).¹⁶

In English traditional grammar nouns are grouped on whether they are common, material, abstract or concrete, but according to Baruah (1991) a more practical classification assigns them to two broad categories; proper and common. The common class is then divided into countable (such as **book**, **pen**) and uncountable nouns (such as **water**, **gold**). In the context of

¹⁵ Most nouns in siSwati do not exhibit a preprefix-augment, but are bare or unaugmented

¹⁶ See Taljaard et al. 1991; Sibanda & Mthembu, 1996, and Thwala, 1996 for a detailed study of the noun classes in siSwati.

the current study, some confusion may arise among the students whose L1 is siSwati with regard to the formation of the plurals forms of the English nouns. Some students may tend to pluralize the nouns according to the categorization of the noun class system of their L1. For instance, *um-tfwalo* ‘luggage’ is a Class 3 noun and its plural counterpart is *imi-tfwalo*, in Class 4. Students might be tempted to pluralize this noun to *luggages as they do in the L1, yet in English this is an uncountable noun.

4.9.2 THE SYSTEM OF CONCORDIAL AGREEMENT

In siSwati there is a definitive relationship between the noun that is a subject or an object and the verb of a sentence. This is manifested by the subject concord affixed to the verb stem (Taljaard et al., 1991, p. 26). Concorde are defined as linguistic units that make nouns agree with the verbs and other elements in sentence structures. As already mentioned above, in siSwati they are derived from the class prefix of a noun and bear close resemblances to the prefix of the noun and they are affixed to the verb in a sentence. Consider Example (4) below:

- (4) *Um- fana u- nats- a lu- bisi*
 NPx1-boy SM1- drink- FV NPx11-milk
 Literally: Boy he drink milk.
 ‘A boy drinks milk.’

In Example 4 above the noun */um-fana/* ‘a boy’ which syntactically is a subject must be brought into concordial agreement with the verb stem */-nats-a/* ‘drink’ by means of a subject concord */u-/*. This subject concord resembles the preprefix of the Class 1 prefix */um-/* from which it was derived.

In monotransitive and ditransitive clauses the concord/class prefix must have the same class of a particular noun phrase of the clause in terms of number and person. The particular noun phrase on which the class prefix depends is referred to as the privileged noun phrase. This means that in siSwati, a noun phrase, whether in double object constructions: Subject, Verb, Indirect Object, and Direct Object (S-V-IO-DO) or in two place verbs: Subject, Verb, and Direct Object (S-V-DO), has to agree with its verb by means of an agreement prefix/concord. The noun phrase functioning as the subject in both the SVO and S-V-IO-DO constructions occasions an agreement prefix on the following verb and the noun phrase functioning as the indirect object in the S-V-IO-DO construction also occasions an agreement prefix on the verb it succeeds as shown in Example (5) below:

arise with some nouns such as those that end in /-s/ but are singular nouns such as scissors and trousers.

4.9.3 THE AGGLUTINATING NATURE OF THE LANGUAGE

Kosch (2006, p. 6) argues that no language corresponds perfectly to any single type, that is exclusively isolating and exclusively agglutinating, Bantu languages of Southern Africa being essentially agglutinating but also exhibiting some fusional and isolating features (Doke, 1954, p. 47; Kosch, 2006, p. 6). This is echoed by Mathonsi (2001) who examined prepositional and adverb phrases in isiZulu and Nurse (2008) who examined tense and aspect in Bantu. SiSwati is a Bantu language and a sister language to isiZulu and as such it exhibits agglutinating, fusional and inflectional features. By making use of prefixes, suffixes and at times internal vowel change, siSwati is an inflectional language.

Kosch (2006, p. 134) defines agglutination in language as a process by which diverse affixes are fixed onto other morphemes in a language the result of which is a single word. Bauer refers to obligatory bound ‘morphs’:

An agglutinating language is one in which there are a number of obligatory bound morphs each of which realises a single morpheme. That is, there is a one-to-one correspondence between morph and morpheme in such languages (Bauer, 1988, p. 246).

This means that words in agglutinating languages are polymorphemic (Kosch, 2006, p. 134) referring to the fact that they have multiple morphemes within a single word and the morphemes that make up the words are obligatory bound. This is echoed by (Nurse, 2008, p. 28) who argues that in agglutinating languages “the strings of morphemes are longer and the morphemes are relatively transparent, having a single shape... and one meaning.”

As an agglutinating language, siSwati strings together different morphemes to express a single word or even idea. Consider the locative predicative and copulative expressions in Example (7) below:

- (7) a) *Ba- s- e- si- kol[o]- eni.*
 SM2 - CPL- LOC- NPx7 - *school-* LOC
'They are at school.'
- b) *Ng- umu- ntfu*
 COP- NPx1- *person*
'It is a person.'
- c) *e- ndl- ini*
 LOC-house-LOC
'In the house.'

In each of the above examples there are no free morphemes: none of the morphemes can function on their own as individual morphs. In English, however, the morphemes are expressed in single words.

Contrary to the agglutinating nature of siSwati, English is isolating/analytic or fusional. In isolating/analytic languages “most word-forms are made up of a single morph” (Bauer, 1988, p. 246).

Furthermore, as Kosch (2006, p. 136) observes, the elements that constitute a word in fusional languages are variable. This means that they undergo various changes in their phonological make-up due to morphological processes. The affixes combine in part with the base form of a morpheme and this may result in a suppletive form, as for example in English where the regular verbs add {-ed} to form their past tense forms but an irregular one such as *sing* changes to *sung* in the past tense form. As all natural languages often exhibit idiosyncratic morphological behaviour that cannot be captured by means of rules and regular expressions (Pretorius & Bosch, 2008, p. 209), it is expected that the differences in the morphological behaviours of the students L1 and may impact on their L2.

Finally, one can point out that orthographically siSwati is conjunctive yet English is disjunctive and with the differences between the two languages so pronounced, it is thus speculated that siSwati L1 speakers may be tempted to transfer these features of their language into an academic language situation.

4.10 THE SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE OF SI SWATI

4.10.1 THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE SI SWATI SENTENCE

The sentence structure of siSwati is governed by the noun and like English it is mainly a Subject, Verb, and Object (SVO) type of language. This means that to create a sentence in

siSwati, one needs a subject, a verb and an object. Overt subjects appear in both English and siSwati in the same canonical surface position. In constructions that have ditransitive verbs (or double objects), the basic order is Subject, Verb, Indirect Object, and Direct Object (S-V-IO-DO). In such constructions, the indirect objects precede the direct objects. In two place verbs (transitive verbs), the order is Subject, Verb, and Direct Object (S-V-DO) (Thwala, 1996). I illustrate this order in Example (8) below.

(8) (a) SVO order

Ø-Simelane u- tseng- e ema - swidi.
 NPx1a-Simelane SCM1a- buy-PST NPx6- sweet
Literally: Simelane he bought sweets.
Simelane bought sweets.

(b) Passive form of SVO order results in OVS

Ema -swidi a- tseng- we ngu- Simelane.
 NPx5- sweet SM6- buy- PASS COP-NPx1a-Simelane
Literally: Sweets they were bought by Simelane.
The sweets were bought by Simelane.

(c) SVIODO order

Ø Simelane u- tseng- ele ba-ntfwana ema-swidi.
 NPx1a-Simelane SM1a-buy-APPLI. NPx2-child NPx6-sweet
Literally: Simelane he bought for children sweets.
Simelane bought the children sweets.

In siSwati the active voice the subject or agent of the sentence appears at the initial position of the sentence before the transitive verb and in the passive voice it appears sentence finally. The object succeeds the verb in the active voice and precedes it in the passive. Example 8(c) is a double object construction. There is a direct object and an indirect one. The indirect object /*bantfwana* ‘children’/ precedes the direct object /*emaswidi* ‘sweets’/. As observed by Buell (2005, p. 63) who was writing about isiZulu, clitic-doubling of objects is pervasive in isiZulu. The same is true of siSwati.

Buell (2005, p.63) ascribes clitic-doubling “to the presence of an overt lexical ... object accompanied by an object marker on the verb”. Sentences with clitic-doubling can appear in all possible word order permutations. I illustrate this in Example 9 below. The siSwati sentences are all possible (and acceptable) translations of the English sentence: *Simelane bought sweets*.

- (9) a) The Subject,Verb,Object order (SVO)
Ø-Simelane u- tseng- e ema-swidi.
 NPx1aSimelane SM1 -buy-PST NPx6- sweet
Literally: Simelane he bought sweets.
- b) The Verb,Object,Subject order (VOS)
U- wa- tseng- ile ema- swidi Ø-Simelane.
 SM1-OM6- buy – PST.DIS NPx6- sweet NPx1a-Simelane
Literally: He them bought sweets Simelane.
- c) The Object,Subject,Verb order (OSV)
Ema-swidi Ø-Simelane u- wa- tseng- ile.
 NPx6- sweet NPx1a- Simelane SM1- OM6- buy- PST.DISJ
Literally: Sweets Simelane he them bought.
- d) The Verb,Subject,Object order (VSO)
U-wa-tseng-ile Ø-Simelane ema-swidi.
 SM1 –OM6- buy- PST.DISJ NPx1a- Simelane NPx6-sweet
Literally: He them bought Simelane the sweets.
- e) The Subject,Object,Verb order (SOV)
Ø-Simelane ema-swidi u-wa-tseng-ile.
 NPx1a-Simelane NPx6-sweet SM1- OM6- buy- PST.DSJ
Literally: Simelane sweets he them bought.
- f) The Object,Verb,Subject order (OVS)
Ema-swidi u-wa- tseng-ile Ø-Simelane.
 NPx6- sweet SM1- OM6- buy- PST.DISJ NPx1a-Simelane
Literally: Sweets he them bought Simelane.

This means that while siSwati's basic word order is also SVO; it is permitted to vary for specific communication purposes (Nurse & Philippon, 2003, p. 121). It is freer as it also allows the other word order permutations when the subject is upturned, meaning that the nominal agreement system permits other possible word orders if the object marker is present and this does not alter the meaning of the sentence.

Native speakers of siSwati may use many cues to determine that Simelane is the subject of each of the sentences in example above and that /emaswidi/ 'sweets' is the object. According to the word-order cue a subject in an active declarative sentence is the first noun, hence Simelane in (9) (a) and (e). Secondly, the meaning relations of lexical items contributes to correct interpretation of Simelane buying sweets rather than vice versa hence as shown in examples 9 (b-f). Thirdly, native speakers also use the agent or patient cue to determine the subject and object of a sentence. The agent performs the action, while the patient suffers the action

performed; hence Simelane is the agent while sweets are the patient. Finally, concordial agreement contributes to the interpretation of agent /patient because a singular third person class a subject requires /u-/ and third person class 6 would require /-wa-/ so there is no ambiguity or confusion.

While Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) tabulate nine, Crystal (2010) tabulates five other flexible patterns of the English sentence. However, Crystal argues that it is only the SVO that is “natural, usual ‘unmarked’ order; the others all convey special effects of an emphatic or poetic kind” (Crystal, 2010, p. 102).

According to Selinker’s (1972) interlanguage transfer theory when languages have the same speech patterns, it is easier for learners to transfer the patterns from one to the other but when the differences between the two languages are pronounced, transfer is most likely to have negative effects.

With the imminent congruency between the word order patterns between English and siSwati, it would be expected that learners would easily transfer their siSwati patterns to English but the disparities may result in negative transfer.

For example, given the large number of word order possibilities in siSwati and the fact that it is a language that relies on morphological agreement, the semantics and pragmatics of the situation assume greater importance in the interpretation of a sentence. Confusion and ungrammaticality or error is thus expected if Swazi learners would simply transfer these patterns or apply the siSwati word order in their acquisition of Academic English.

4.10.2 THE USE OF THE PASSIVE

According to Doke (1954, p. 67 and 1992, p. 135); Sibanda and Mthembu, (1996, p. 107) the passive in isiZulu and siSwati indicates that the action expressed by the verb is performed or acted upon, by an agent. According to Doke (1992, p. 135) it carries the same force as does the passive voice in English. However, the most common form of the suffix of the passive is /-wa/ (Doke, 1954, 1992; Sibanda & Mthembu 1996; Ziervogel, 1952; Ziervogel & Mabuza, 1976) as in *fun-a* ‘look for’ > *fun-wa* ‘be looked for’.

- (10) a) *Li- phoyisa li- fun- a Ø-babe.*
 NPx5-police-man SM5- look. for- FV NPx1a-father
 Literally: (The) policeman he is looking for father.

b) Ø-Babe u- fun- wa li- phoyisa.
 NPx1a-father SM1- look. for- PASS COPNPx5-policeman
Literally: Father is looked for by (the) policeman.

As shown in example (10) (b) when a verb is used in the passive form, in isiZulu and siSwati the agent of the action is implied and when it is expressed it comes in the form of a copulative. As Doke (1992, p. 135) observed, the copulative is formed from the substantive that expresses the agent and it succeeds the passive verb.

Doke (1954, p. 67) also observed that:

In Nguni languages the suffix /-wa-/ may under given circumstances exert phonological influence upon the final consonant of the verb stem and this influence may even affect retrogressively consonants preceding the final.

When this happens, palatalization takes place. For example, a verb such as *bamba* 'seize', - becomes *banjwa* 'be seized' or *banjiswa* 'be caused to seize' with retrogressive palatalization.

Of note with the formation of the passive in siSwati as shown in Example (10) (a) and (b) above is that the object of the active sentence, *babe* 'father' in (11) (a) maybe promoted to the subject position as in (10) (b), the active subject does not become an object in the passive sentence. As Bearth (2003, p. 135) notes:

While the positions may change, the semantic roles assigned to the referents of the two nouns remain unaffected by the changes in the syntax of the sentence [agent/patient] and the morphology of the verb.

This means that in their formation of the active and passive constructions in English, mistakes may arise with the promotion of the agent (which is in the nominative case) to the subject position of the passive sentence, resulting not necessarily in the agent being treated as the patient but a confusion in the verb tense and the case of the agent. For instance, in the sentence:

(11)

(a) I milk a cow at home.

Ngi-seng-a in-khomo e-khaya
 SM1ps-milk-FV NPx9-cow LOC-NPx5-home.

(b) A cow is milked by me at home

In-khomo i-seng-w-a ngi-mi e-khaya
 NPx9-Cow SM9-milk-PASS-FV COP-ABS.PRON1ps LOC-NPx5-home

While students may not treat the cow as the agent and me as the patient, I foresee a situation where the 1st person absolute pronoun **me** (which is in the oblique case) could be converted to the agentive case (**I**) resulting in structures such as:

(12) The cow is milked by I.

4.10.3 AUXILIARIES

The auxiliaries or deficient predicate (Ziervogel, Louw & Taljaard, 1981, p. 210) or halfway verbs (Louw, 1987, p. 7) are an extension or modification of an action (Ziervogel et al., 1981, p. 210) and cannot stand on their own as independent verbs (Sibanda & Mthembu, 1996, p. 126). Since they are seldom used as words by themselves, auxiliaries are used to form a compound predicate which, while it consists of two verbs, constitutes a single unit (Ziervogel et al., 1981).

Auxiliary verbs in siSwati are always followed by another predicate or a predicative form such as an infinitive as in Example 13, the participial as in Example 14, the subjunctive as in Example 15 below.

(13)

Infinitive

<i>Ku-mel-e</i>	<i>ku-lahl-w-e;</i>	<i>ku-bol-ile</i>
SM17bec.fitting-PST.CONJ	SP17 SBJV-throw.away- SBJV	SM15-rot-PST.DISJ
<i>Literally: It be fitting to throw away it rotten.</i>		
<i>It has to be thrown away, it is rotten</i>		

(14)

Participial

<i>Ø-Zoleka</i>	<i>u-hamb-a</i>	<i>a-hlek-a</i>
NPx1a-Zoleka	SM1-keep on (cf walk)- FV	SM1PART- laugh-FV
<i>Literally: Zoleka she keeps on she laughing.</i>		
<i>'Zoleka keeps laughing.'</i>		

(15)

The subjunctive mood

<i>Sical-e</i>	<i>si-thandaz-e</i>	<i>si-nga-ka-dl-i</i>
SM2pp-start- PST	SM2pp- pray-SBJV	SM2pp-PART.NEG-eat-NEG
<i>Literally: We start and we pray we not yet having eaten.</i>		
<i>'We start by praying before we eat.'</i>		

The examples demonstrate that the auxiliary verbs are used in conjunction with lexical verbs that are in different forms, eg. the infinitive, the participial and the subjunctive.

4.11 THE PRAGMATIC DOMAIN OF SIswATI

4.11.1 QUESTION FORMATION

In siSwati discourse, in most cases, question words appear after the verb. Consider the following examples.

(16)

a)
U- ti- tfol- a nini ti- cu?
 SM1-OM8-to.get-FV *when* NPx8-degree?
 ‘When are you graduating?’

b)
Ba- sebent- a kuphi?
 SM2-work-FV *where?*
Literally: They work where?
 ‘Where are they working?’

In the above examples (16) (a) and (b) the siSwati lexical items that mark questions /-ni/, and /-phi/ are at the end of the sentence. In the English versions, however the /wh-/ word is placed at the beginning of each of the sentences.

With this incongruity in question formation in the two languages, it is expected that some confusion may arise and equally pose a problem to L2 learners as they may use the patterns of their L1 to write English sentences, patterns that run counter to those of Academic English. This will be most noticeable when the L2 speaker has to embed a question in an English sentence or refer to it indirectly. In siSwati the embedded question does not cause any change in syntax or tense: For instance,

(17)

She wanted to know where he was

is translated into siSwati as:

U-fune kw-ati kutsi a-be- kuphi
 SM1-want-ANT INF-know that SM1SBJV-be -SBJV *where*
Literally: She wanted to know that he was where.

If one back translates the sentence in (17) above it is clear that in siSwati, in the embedded question, there is no inversion of the subject and the auxiliary, and there is also no tense change.

4.11.2 IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

To make meaning clearer, Swazis tend to use idiomatic expressions in their discourses. These are expressions whose meaning is not deductible from the individual lexical items that constitute them. They are strictly metaphorical and not literal. For instance,

(18)

(a)

A-ka-na-sifuba

SM1-NEG-ASS-NPx7-chest

Literally: S/he does not have a chest.

'He cannot keep a secret.'

(b)

W-a-khahlel-w-a

li-hhashi

e-sifub-eni

SM1-FAR.PST-kick-PASS COP-NPx5-horse LOC-chest-LOC

Literally: S/he was kicked by a horse on the chest.

'He is a liar.'

In any language idioms are socio-culturally determined and are indicators of the wisdom and observational skills of the language of which they form a part. To a speaker, they are indicators of mastery of that language. Learners who are not proficient enough in a language usually apply the knowledge of their L1 to interpret the idiomatic expression in the L2 (Kamwangamalu & Chisanga 1996). One therefore finds the target language's idioms are interpreted literally to another language and the L1's idioms directly translated to the L2. This happens when users of a L2 are not proficient enough or do not have a native like command of the language. For instance, the saying 'Do not throw out the baby with the bathwater' could be literally interpreted that when one baths a baby in a bath basin, one should not, on completion, dispose of the water together with the baby. What is actually meant by this idiomatic expression, however, is that in any situation of literal or metaphorical "cleaning out" one not should be careful to retain the good things while discarding those that are bad.

4.11.3 ELABORATE SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Peculiar to siSwati is superfluity in statements¹⁷. According to De Koning (2009) siSwati presents information in a very elaborate sentence structure. Structuring and presenting information in this manner is directly related to Swazi cultural practices of including as much information in a description as possible. To exclude some information may be regarded as rude

¹⁷ See 6.4.4.5 of this study

or disrespectful. Culturally this is to ensure that the message is clear to the listener though in English this is viewed as a tautology, needless qualification, and unnecessary repetition of words and as such redundant. One would expect sentences that are packed with voluminous information that renders them too long and poorly structured.

According to the Chomskyan (1965) Universal Grammar when children acquire language, they pick all the degenerate input in the environment and process it in the language acquisition device and this means that those exposed to a siSwati speaking environment pick even the superfluity and tautologies of the input around them.

4.11.4 CULTURE, STYLE AND POLITENESS

Differences in cultural orientations of two different groups of people speaking different languages may cause misunderstandings. According to Sithebe (2011):

Differences in cultural practices, communication style and behaviour sometimes give rise to miscommunication or misunderstanding when people from different cultural backgrounds and languages come together.

This cannot be overemphasised in the communication styles of Swazi learners' L1 and L2. The vital pragmatic aspect of Swazi communication style is that Swazis tend to be overly polite and too repetitive. In a study by Sithebe (2011) where she was investigating the differences in the communication styles of siSwati and American English speakers, one American respondent observed Swazis are "also more indirect, passive and less confrontational. Communication is more time consuming... [and] more round about" (Sithebe 2011, p. 46).

Further to that, it is my opinion (and one that I have had corroborated by friends, family and colleagues who are interested in observing the discourse patterns) that Swazis try not to talk about a specific, potentially difficult, matter in a direct way. For instance, I personally cannot talk directly about the flaws of the monarchical governance of Swaziland or about my in-laws. Being right is less important than following protocol. Information is often guarded jealously and only shared on a piecemeal basis. Swazis tend to be very indirect when communicating.

In acquiring a language, one acquires even the culture embodied in the language (Wardhaugh, 1998), and it appears that the language/culture debate is one that needs to be explored with regard to siSwati and English respectively because rigorous scientific analysis has generally been seen as being part of English discourses which favour Graeco-Latin lexicons and no research or work has been done on the intellectualisation of siSwati for academic purposes.

Having been exposed to L1 input structured linguistically and pragmatically as discussed above, the question is, how do learners whose L1 is siSwati balance these competencies with the Academic English they are expected to operate in in the academic contexts?

As the discussion has shown, the structure of siSwati is flexible while the discourse patterns and socio-cultural phenomena are complex. The flexible structure, on one hand, and the complex discourse patterns, on the other, could impact on the students' abilities to grasp and maintain Academic English competencies. This study, therefore, examines errors in Academic English by siSwati speaking students and seeks to establish if these can be related back to the linguistic and socio-cultural specificities of their L1.

4.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter has linguistically classified the siSwati language in relation to other Nguni languages in the Sub-Sahara. It has outlined the dialects of the language that are exhibited in the four regions of Swaziland and some parts of neighbouring South Africa.

This chapter has also contextualized the teaching and learning of siSwati and English within Swaziland. Contextualizing the two languages within Swaziland is done in order to demonstrate how each of the two official languages is weighted, and how English is privileged in the education system of the country.

Finally, this chapter has examined not only research on the influence of the L1 on the acquisition of a L2; it has deliberated on particular siSwati linguistic features that are susceptible to cross-linguistic transfer as well as other pragmatic and stylistic competencies that L1 siSwati speakers bring with them to the academic language learning situation. Empirical evidence (McAllister et al., 2002; Paradis & Navarro, 2003; Ramirez et al., 2010, and Scot & Tucker, 1974) on the influence of L1 on the acquisition of L2 has not only shed light on how L1 impacts on English, but confirmed interference from L1s in the acquisition of L2s.

It is hoped that a comprehensive discussion of siSwati structure alongside Academic English in the educational context of Swaziland will bring to light the competencies that may facilitate or inhibit SLA. The focus of the next chapter is the methodology used to answer the research question of the current study.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding Chapters 2, 3 and 4, I reviewed the literature related to the study. In Chapter 2, I considered a wide range of processes involved in SLA and also examined the language acquisition theories advanced for both L1 and L2 acquisition. L1 acquisition theories have been relevant in foregrounding SLA. All the theories referred to in Chapter 2 (apart from Behaviourism) attest to the fact that language acquisition is a cognitive process and those that deal with SLA suggest not only pedagogically sound ways for aiding acquisition but argue that the acquisition of an L2 is influenced by the learner's L1.

In Chapter 3, I examined what is understood by "Academic English" and the criteria used to evaluate proficiency levels of this variety in different academic contexts. This I achieved by reviewing the different frameworks that guide Academic English: that of Corson (1997) and Scarcella (2003). I concluded that not only is the acquisition of Academic English a global problem, but that tertiary students in higher education institutions generally struggle to communicate in ways that would lead to academic and employment success.

In Chapter 4, I detailed the linguistic classification of the siSwati language and also examined its linguistic and extra linguistic characteristics that are prone to cross-linguistic transfer. In this chapter, I also contextualized the teaching and learning of siSwati and English within Swaziland. Contextualizing the two languages within Swaziland was done in order to demonstrate the unequal status of the two official languages in Swaziland's education system. In Chapter 4, I also examined research that has studied the influence of an L1 on the acquisition of a L2 and empirical evidence which confirms interference from L1s in the acquisition of L2s. I also considered some siSwati linguistic features: its grammar and discourse patterns in an effort to show the structural and pragmatic features of this language that are susceptible to cross-linguistic transfer and the competencies that L1 siSwati speakers bring with them to the academic language learning situation.

In this chapter, Chapter 5, I detail the methodologies and data gathering techniques I used in obtaining answers to the research question(s) guiding the study. I further outline and justify the approaches and the instruments that were used.

5.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

English language is the medium of instruction from Grade 4 and a compulsory subject at all schools in Swaziland. It is also the language of instruction in Swaziland's higher education institutions. The mother tongue of 98% of the students admitted into colleges and universities in Swaziland is siSwati. The current research investigates the influence of L1siSwati on the acquisition of Academic English. The research question guiding the study, therefore, is: How does having siSwati as an L1 impact on the acquisition of Academic English by tertiary students in Swaziland?

5.3 RESEARCH SETTING/SITE

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001, p. 151) site based fieldwork is the essence of any ethnographic study. The field work locations of this study were four institutions of higher learning in the kingdom of Swaziland namely; the William Pitcher Teachers' College Ngwane Teachers' College, the Southern Africa Nazarene University (Faculties of Education and Health) and the Swaziland College of Technology. I chose these tertiary institutions primarily because of the diversity in intake of students from different societal, educational and disciplinary backgrounds. Another reason for the choice of these tertiary institutions was the fact that qualifications obtained from them are perceived as the gateway to employment opportunities and upward social mobility. Products of these institutions are likely to be representative of greater market products from diverse educational and academic backgrounds and communities. I also specifically chose the William Pitcher Teachers' College because lecturers had approached me about their students' low proficiency levels in Academic English. The William Pitcher Teachers' College is located in Manzini which is in central Swaziland. The college trains both primary and secondary school teachers and awards them with a Primary or Secondary Teachers' Diploma (PTD or STD) respectively. Ngwane Teachers' College is in Nhlengano in the Shiselweni region of the country. It trains primary school teachers and awards them with a Primary Teachers' Diploma. The Southern Africa Nazarene University, the Faculty of Education trains primary school teachers, and awards them with a Primary Teachers' Diploma, and the Faculty of Health trains laboratory technicians and general nurses and awards them with a Bachelor's degree and a General Nursing Diploma respectively. The Swaziland College of Technology offers a variety of courses and awards different qualifications: certificates, diplomas and degrees.

5.4 RESEARCH POPULATION/ SAMPLING

I selected a small group of students from each of the four colleges I identified for the study. This selection was a representation of the larger tertiary population under study. Through studying the sample's characteristics I made inferences and generalizations about the whole population as suggested by Mushoriwa (2009, p. 17). Ideally, random sampling would have been considered desirable, but since the current study was conducted in educational settings where random sampling was not feasible, I used convenience sampling instead. The convenience sampling involved using groups that were accessible: such as available classes of first and final year students.

The respondents in the current study were nine (9) lecturers and three hundred and fifty-one (351) first and final year undergraduate students in the Faculties of Education at Southern Africa Nazarene University and the Swaziland College of Technology, the Faculty of Health Sciences at Southern Africa Nazarene University and the Departments of English and SiSwati at William Pitcher Teachers' College and the Faculty of Language Arts at Ngwane Teachers' College.

The choice of first and final year students was influenced by two factors. Firstly, first years had just arrived at college and first year is a crucial stage in the process of socializing into the undergraduate role and a highly sensitive touchstone for the quality of the student experience (Evans & Morrison, 2011, p. 199). Secondly, final year students were already preparing for the world of work and were about to enter the workplace in Swaziland and abroad. Since the world of work is predominantly English-speaking, in a year's time, the final year students would engage in communication and discursive practices with professional colleagues.

Lecturers were selected because they were interacting with the students in various ways and were involved in both the teaching and assessment of the students' tests, assignments and examinations.

Although other institutions of higher learning in the country such as the University of Swaziland (UNISWA), Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, Swaziland College of Theology, and the Good Shepherd Nursing College may have similar experiences with the low English proficiency levels of their students, because of the exigencies of time and the specific objectives of the study, it was not expedient to examine all of them. The four that were

chosen served as a microcosm of English proficiency levels in educational institutions in general.

5.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

Before embarking on the study, I designed a plan including procedures and techniques, to help me collect, process, analyse and interpret the data for the study in such a way that maximum control would be exercised over factors that could interfere with the validity of the research results (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

Firstly, my own experience as a lecturer in English language courses at the University of Swaziland and that of colleagues in other tertiary institutions in Swaziland led me to hypothesize that students were not adequately proficient in Academic English.

Secondly, I read up on Academic English and proficiency and how students elsewhere fared in English in tertiary institutions.

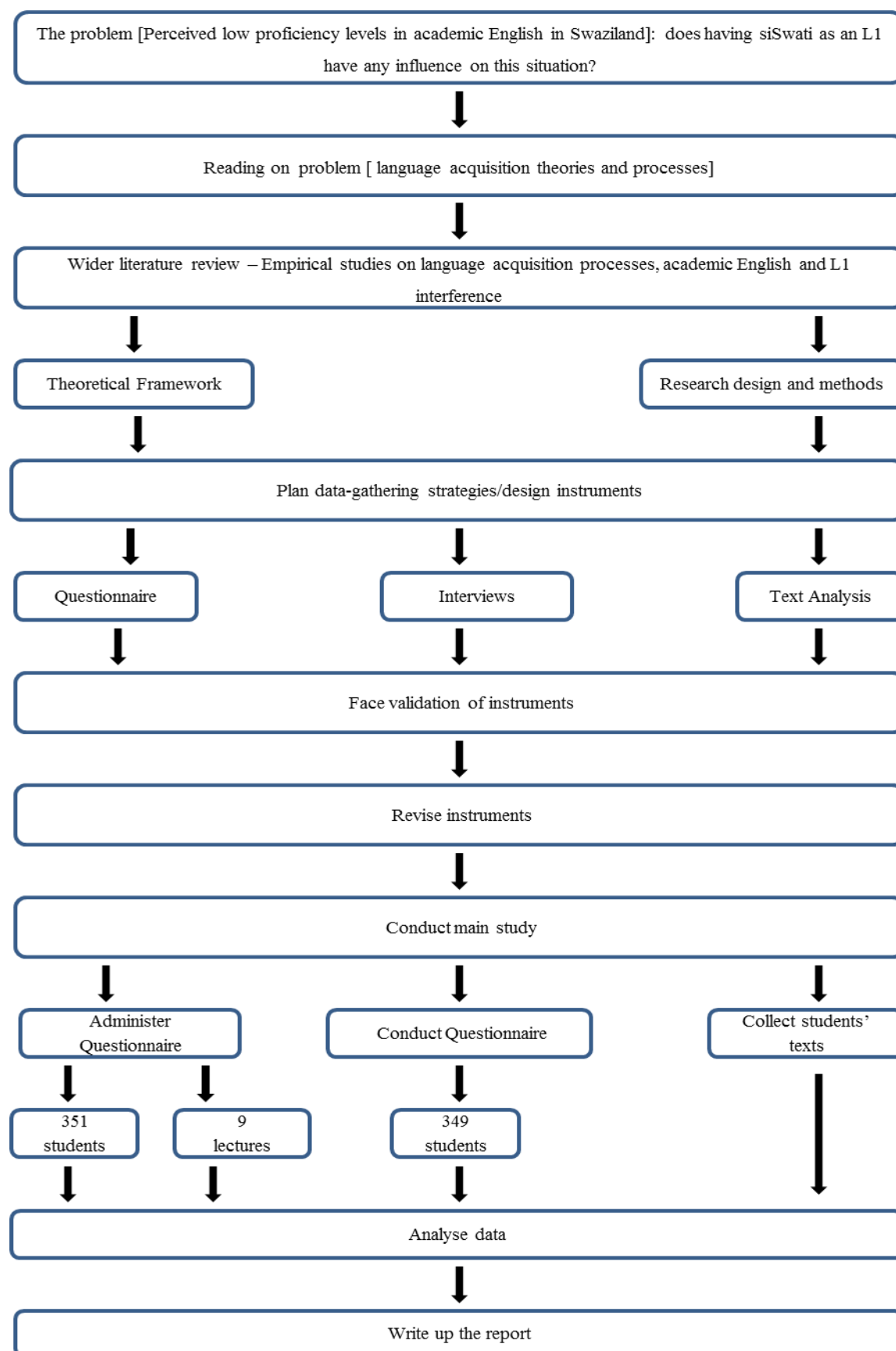
Thirdly, I conducted a wider literature review. I examined the theories and processes of L1 and L2 acquisition and what constrained acquisition in an L2 learning situation. On the basis of the readings, I conceptualized theoretical frameworks on which to base the study. Error analysis, Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, Cummins' (1984) Interdependency and L1 Interference Theories were found to be viable for the study.

I then steered the study through a survey method using questionnaires, interview questions and students' texts as the data gathering instruments. To validate the instruments used, I first piloted the study in two high schools: Zamani and Sigcineni High Schools both in the Manzini region. With the assistance of the teachers in the piloted schools and my supervisor, the results of the pilot study enabled me to revise the instruments.

After the revision of the data gathering instruments, I conducted the study, and with the help of some lecturers, I administered the questionnaires (appendix A & C) and conducted the interviews (appendix B)¹⁸. I analysed the results and coded them according to emerging themes and finally wrote the report project. The research design I used in this study is summarily outlined in Figure 10 below.

¹⁸ Interviews were later converted to extended open-ended written questionnaires as will be explained in 5.2.2

FIGURE 10: FLOWCHART OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN FOR THE STUDY



PILOT STUDY

I first conducted a brief exploratory investigation with completing high school learners (Grade 12s) in two schools in the Manzini region. I did this in order to try out particular procedures, measurement instruments or methods of analysis and further detect possible flaws in the measurement procedures. The pilot study was also aimed at helping me identify unclear or ambiguously formulated items. Through the pilot study I noticed and identified approaches that would be most effective in addressing the research problem.

During the piloting stage a few problems were encountered in the completion of the questionnaire and interviewing process. Some questions were too long and the interviews were too demanding. Based on these encounters, I consulted my supervisor and the school teachers where the study was piloted on changes that could be made. I duly implemented the changes and rephrased the questionnaires and reduced the number of interview questions as suggested by the consulted personnel.

Preliminary analysis of the pilot study established that 70% of the pupils had serious problems with Academic English, the language of instruction. Out of 26 pupils, only 4 claimed to be at the intermediate level of proficiency in English while the rest were elementary. By way of contrast 80% of the pupils were at the advanced and native speaker level in siSwati.

The analysis of their texts and speech while conducting the oral interviews revealed a strong mother tongue influence in their written and spoken English and this seemed to confirm the L1 influence in the acquisition of Academic English. This did not come as a surprise to me because they had indicated in the questionnaire data that 75% spoke siSwati all the time and there was no form of English literature around them. Those that had been exposed to literature in siSwati cited oral literature. There was no library in the schools and their parents did not buy them books as presents. 75% of the class had never attended preschool and their teachers switched codes in the classroom to make them understand concepts. This had suggested that the pupils in the schools where the study was piloted had no access to authentic input in the L2 in their immediate environments: the school and at home.

5.6 RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA-GATHERING INSTRUMENTS

To describe the effect first language siSwati has on the acquisition of Academic English from the point of view of college students in the current study; I used a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry. I chose this method because it provided extensive opportunities to answer the research question. The qualitative method answered questions about the complex nature of the language acquisition and learning phenomena with the purpose of describing and understanding these from the participants' point of view (Leedy & Ormrod 2001, p. 101). Through the qualitative research method, I was able to gather an in-depth understanding of students' behaviour and the reasons that governed such behaviour.

However, since in the current study I also needed to establish systematic, rigorous, focused and tightly controlled data that involved precise measurements and produced reliable and replicable data that was generalizable to other institutions of higher learning, I drew in the quantitative method as well. According to Wood and Brink (1998), quantitative research provides an accurate account of the characteristics of particular individuals, groups or situations. In the current study, the quantitative method helped define a single reality by means of careful measurement and it also examined relationships, and determined causality among variables, where possible.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004); Reeves and Hedberg (2003); Dornyei (2007) and Mushoriwa (2009) refer to the combination of two research methods in one study as the mixed-methods paradigm. The reason for mixing the methods was that, while quantitative research objectively reports reality in terms of statistics (Silverman, 2006, p. 35), qualitative research provides a deeper understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from a purely quantitative methodology (Silverman, 2006, p. 56).

5.7 THE GENERAL RESEARCH APPROACH AND DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS

In order to satisfy the general aims of the methods used, in the current study I employed the survey approach. From each of the institutions that participated, students from first and the final year were systematically surveyed in order for me to elicit data relating to their demographics, opinions, habits, and experiences. The students surveyed were taken from a representative sample and the data was mainly collected by means of self-report questionnaires and written interviews and an analysis of the students' written work in the form of assignments.

I administered both the questionnaire and the structured interview questions to the students so that I triangulated the results of one technique with that of the other. This was done in a bid to see if the same pattern of results was obtained and to enhance the reliability and validity of the interpreted results (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). All the three instruments would contribute in answering the research question and establish the impact the L1 siSwati has on the respondents' acquisition of Academic English.

5.7.1 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The students' questionnaire (see appendix A) comprised three sets of questions. Factual questions elicited the respondents' demographic characteristics, level of education, language learning history and the amount of time students had spent learning their L1 and L2. Behavioural questions were used to find out details relating to the respondents' lifestyles, habits, personal history, and the extent of their knowledge of their L1 and L2. I designed attitudinal questions in order to find out what the respondents thought of a wide range of topics including attitudes and feelings towards their L1 and L2.

ADMINISTERING THE QUESTIONNAIRES

I administered the questionnaires (see appendix A) to students in their classes with the assistance of either lecturers or senior students at all the institutions that took part in the survey. They were administered to students who had consented to the study and whose course lecturers had agreed that I use their teaching time.

Prior to the administration of the questionnaires, I gave informants background information on the study and informed them that they were free to ask questions. At the Swaziland College of Technology, 27 first-year and 25 final-year Diploma in Commercial Teaching students consented to both the questionnaire and the extended open-ended questionnaires (see appendix B). At the Southern Africa Nazarene University, the Faculty of Health Sciences, 59 first years consented to the extended open-ended questionnaires and 57 to the questionnaire. Final-year students totalled 35 for the questionnaire and 30 for the extended open-ended questionnaires. At Ngwane Teachers' College, 50 final-year and 47 first-year students took part in the study.

A different questionnaire (see appendix C) was administered to the lecturers who had consented to the study after they too had been briefed on its content and aims. The lecturers who took part in the study included those in the Department of Academic Communication Skills at the Swaziland College of Technology, the Departments of Language Arts and Mathematics at

Ngwane Teachers' College, the Department of Languages at Southern Africa Nazarene University in the Faculty of Education and those in the Department of English at William Pitcher Teachers' College. Their questionnaire was different from that of the students in that it consisted of only factual and open-ended questions, and that was the extent of the lecturers' participation in the study.

The items in the students' questionnaire comprised both open-ended and closed questions. They were sequenced such that four areas were addressed.

- a) Background information (see appendix A, section A)
- b) Habits and experiences with regard to the use of L1 (see appendix A, section B)
- c) Habits and experiences with regard to the use of L2 (see appendix A, section C)
- d) General practices in both the L1 and the L2 (see appendix A, section D)

The sequence was intended to authenticate how learners learned their L1s and L2 and also to establish their proficiency levels in Academic English and siSwati. They also established the attitudes and opinions on the use of English and siSwati both by the lecturers and their students.

The items in the lecturers' questionnaire comprised factual questions (see appendix C, section A) and open-ended ones (see appendix C, section B) that addressed their background information and their experiences and opinions regarding the teaching and learning of Academic English in their institutions.

The survey was initially intended to be conducted between June and December 2013, and single out only tertiary students in Swaziland. The focus of the investigation was the students' L1's influence on their learning of Academic English. However, due to the long process of protocol and obtaining permission to conduct research at these institutions, the actual process of data-gathering only commenced in November and lasted until December 2013. At that time of year, students and lecturers were preparing for examinations.

5.7.2 THE INTERVIEWS

Through the structured interviews, I had wanted to collect data from direct verbal communication between the student respondents and myself (Cohen & Manion, 1997). This would have allowed me to obtain an in-depth perspective on the culture of the phenomena I was investigating, which is difficult to do through other data-gathering instruments.

However, because of the exigencies of time and the fact that both students and lecturers were preparing for examinations, I converted the structured interviews, which were initially intended to be oral and audio-recorded, to extended open-ended written questionnaires (see appendix B).

I used the extended open-ended written questionnaires in order to supplement the data from the questionnaires in order to get more in-depth information, and to establish the different ways the participants learned their L1 and L2. People in any speech community learn L1s and L2s differently; therefore, the extended open-ended written helped establish a deeper picture of what these behaviours were.

CONDUCTING THE EXTENDED OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEWS

I administered extended open-ended written questionnaires to the students who had consented taking part in the study. The extended open-ended written questionnaires consisted of both fixed-choice questions [yes or no] and open-ended questions. I personally preferred the open-ended questions to the fixed-choice questions because open-ended questions offer an authentic understanding of the respondents' experiences (Silverman, 2006).

A total of three hundred and forty-nine students (349) in total in all four institutions took part in the extended open-ended written questionnaires. After explaining the reason why I had converted the extended open-ended questionnaires from being oral to written, with the assistance of a lecturer or a senior student, I gave the respondents the question papers and requested them to respond to them as honestly as they could as the results would have implications for their and their children's education.

5.7.3 ANALYSES OF STUDENTS' TEXTS

Students' texts included their completed homework and assignments. These were texts from those students who had consented to the study. Each student provided one essay which had been previously given as an assignment and which included creative writing and research work. The students of Ngwane Teacher's College and the Southern Africa University Faculty of Education wrote descriptive essays. Ngwane Teacher's College students described their first day at a new job or at college, while those at the Southern Africa University Faculty of Education wrote on the funniest incident that had ever occurred in their classroom. The students of William Pitcher Teacher's College, Southern Africa Nazarene University and the Swaziland College of Technology wrote research essays. William Pitcher Teacher's College students

discussed the tenets of the Communicative Language Teaching approach and its implications for teachers of English at primary school level in Swaziland. The Southern Africa Nazarene University Faculty of Health students discussed the five steps of the decision making process for a nurse midwife assigned to a maternity unit lacking equipment while the students of the Swaziland College of Technology discussed research methodology. (While the copies of the raw data are available, because of their voluminous nature, they could not be appended to the thesis).

The choice of students' texts was based on three factors. Firstly, students' texts allowed me actual access to see how Academic English is used by students in Swaziland. Secondly, the respondents' written texts contained the discourse patterns the students used in their communication. Finally, research has shown that independent students' work is a better test of linguistic knowledge than one deliberately designed. The written texts thus helped me gain an understanding of the complexities of students' written academic discourses.

In the study I targeted tertiary students in their first semester because this was the time first years, who had been introduced to communication and academic literacy skills, would be grappling with its fundamentals while final year students, on the other hand, were supposedly conversant with the conventions of Academic English.

I was given access to anonymous written student work that had not yet been assessed by the lecturers. This was done in order to avoid any influence the lecturers assessments might have had on my evaluations of these texts.

STAGES INVOLVED IN DOCUMENT (TEXT) ANALYSIS

I conducted a close analysis of errors in the texts written by students and it was the analysis of these texts that uncovered the limitations in proficiency and showed the extent to which the learner's L1 impacts on the students' performance in Academic English.

Firstly, I thoroughly read the students' written work in order to uncover errors in their Academic English. My judgement on the deviations in Academic English was based on whether they were mistakes or genuine grammatical errors that emanated from the learner's L1.

Secondly, I categorised the errors I found into groups in order to establish their nature. If I found them to be related to the L1, I categorised them according to the grammatical category where they belonged (whether they were syntactic, lexical, semantic or pragmatic).

Scarcella's (2003) framework was used to check the nature of the errors because it provides the language components necessary in order to categorize the errors.

Thirdly, I developed a table from categories and patterns emerging from the errors.

5.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Once I had obtained the data, I analysed it by identifying responses to the guiding questions. I continued analysing the data while still working on the research by coding the data thematically according to their meanings, patterns, regularities and critical events.

I used codes that attached meaning to the raw data to retrieve and organise chunks of text in order to categorise it according to particular themes. The themes I identified before, during and after data collection served as umbrella constructs (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2005). For ideas from the interviews, writings that did not fit into any of the thematic categories, I designed substantive categories, such as dangling modifiers, word for word translations of idiomatic expressions, ambiguous sentences and verbosity.

In the questionnaire and extended open-ended questionnaire analysis, the fixed choice questions were tabulated and converted to percentiles while the open-ended questions were coded.

For the students' essays, the analysis was by and large textual and to assess the essays, I followed the systematic functional linguistic method (SFL) to identify the linguistic features associated or that typified and distinguished students' language from Academic English.

In the systematic functional linguistic approach, texts are treated as discourse situated in a particular context. The approach involves a careful analysis of the written discourse, focusing on various aspects. The selection criteria following Bachman's (1990, p. 86, 87) model of language competence focuses on pragmatic and organizational competence. Pragmatic competence involves sociolinguistic competence (sensitivity to dialect or variety, register, naturalness, cultural references and figures of speech). Organizational competence comprises the abilities that are involved in controlling the formal structure of language and they are grammatical and textual. The grammatical competence comprises the competences involved in language usage such as vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and phonology/graphology, and textual competence comprises rhetorical organization and cohesion (Bachman, 1990, p. 87).

However, because Bachman's (1990) model focuses on complex aspects of discourse analysis, some of which are beyond the scope of this study, Scarcella's (2003) model which focuses on the atomic elements of Academic English was preferred. Therefore, in order to assess the proficiency levels and the influence of the students L1 in their L2, I systematically analysed the students' essays predominantly following Scarcella's (2003) framework.

The students' corpus was marked for linguistic and extra linguistic features that characterize their L2; I analysed their errors according to the following grammatical and lexico-semantic groupings:

ERRORS WITH TENSE AND FORMS OF THE VERB

- Inconsistent use of tense
- Problems with the progressive form of the verb
- Finite verb incorrectly formed

ERRORS WITH AUXILIARY VERBS

- Conflation of **do** with the past tense
- Stressed **do**
- The use of the modal **can** combined with **be able**
- The misuse of the modal **must**

ERRORS WITH PREPOSITIONS AND CONJUNCTIONS

- Misuse of prepositions
- Errors of prepositions with possessives
- Conjunctive balance
- Overuse of the coordinator **and**

ERRORS WITH NOUNS AND PRONOUNS

- Topicalization or resumptive pronouns
- Problems with the use of articles
- Pluralization errors

ERRORS OF REGISTER, STYLE AND SEMANTICS

- Code-switching/Code-mixing
- Direct translations
- Spelling problems
- Literal translations

- Elaborate sentence structure
- Tautology
- Direct translation of idiomatic expressions
- Semantic shift
- Informal register
- Unclear/Ambiguous expressions

ERRORS OF SYNTAX

- Word order permutations
- Problem with reported questions
- Retention of anti-deletions
- Errors with relative clauses
- Dangling / misplaced modifiers
- Non-standard placement of adverbs

5.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS/ISSUES

According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:181) the consideration of ethics come into play at three stages of a research project, namely; when participants are recruited, during the intervention and/ or the measurement procedure they are subjected to and in the release of the results obtained. To ensure that I adhered to the code of ethics, I considered the four principles of ethical issues in research as explained by Leedy and Armrod (2001); Polit & Hungler (1999) and Welman et.al. (2005).

5.9.1 PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY

I took ethical approval prior to the commencement of the field research. I wrote letters first to the Director of Education and then to the different institutions where the research would be conducted seeking permission to conduct the study. Written permission was granted by the Director of the Ministry of Education and Training in Swaziland and the Vice Chancellor of the Southern African Nazarene University. William Pitcher Teachers' College and Ngwane Teachers' College reached a verbal agreement with me on the 16th and 18th October

respectively. The School of Languages and Literatures at the University of Cape Town also granted me ethics clearance¹⁹.

5.9.2 INFORMED CONSENT

Silverman (2006, p. 324) and Ryen (2004, p. 231) interpret informed consent as the agreement reached by both the researcher and the participant where the participant has the right to know that they are being researched, the right to be informed about the nature of the research and the right to withdraw at any time. In informed consent participants are not pressurised into agreeing to take part in a study.

In this study, I personally informed the authorities of the institutions that participated and the participants in the research about the nature of the study and they fully consented to taking part in the study. I further assured them of confidentiality. To do this, I respected the respondents' rights to self-determination made them aware that the study was strictly voluntary and that they had a right to withdraw at any time they so wished. I took it upon myself not to cause any disruption in the daily operations of the institutions that participated in the study.

5.9.3 RIGHT TO PRIVACY

I have duly honoured the participants' right to privacy. In the research report I have kept the nature and quality of participant's responses and performances strictly confidential as the responses have been coded. Participants' names have not been disclosed in the research report. In cases where participants' behaviours are described in depth, pseudonyms have been used in order to assure anonymity.

5.9.4 PROTECTION FROM HARM [THE PRINCIPLE OF BENEFICENCE]

This principle dictates that respondents should be free from harm and exploitation by the researcher. I attempted by all means possible not to expose the participants of this study to any form of undue physical harm. However, some psychological discomfort might have been experienced from the nature of some of the interview questions and questionnaires but participants were at all times aware that they could withdraw from the study and no objections were lodged.

¹⁹ Although ethics clearance was obtained from all institutions concerned I was not furnished with any clearance numbers.

5.9.5 UNETHICAL TACTICS

Finally, I did not manipulate the respondents by the use of unethical tactics (such as channelling their responses towards a particular direction or making implicit suggestions as to what I would have preferred them to write) and techniques (Fontana & Frey, 1994) when administering the extended open-ended written questionnaire.

5.10 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have deliberated on the research methodology of the study and further described the research design. I have given a detailed account of the methodologies and data gathering techniques I used in obtaining answers to the research question(s) guiding the study. I have further outlined and justified the approaches and the instruments that I used. Of note is that the survey approach I employed took on board both the qualitative and quantitative methods which together form a mixed method approach.

Using the techniques described above, in the next chapter I analyse the data that has been gathered from higher education institutions in Swaziland. The aim of the analysis is to establish the proficiency levels in English of higher education students and establish the extent to which students L1 siSwati has influenced the students' acquisition of Academic English. I also kept an open mind as to other possible factors (other than the L1) that might affect the students' ability to express themselves clearly in Academic English.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I presented the methodological underpinnings guiding the current study. The focus of this chapter is fourfold. In the first section I begin by presenting findings from both the students' and the lecturers' questionnaires. This data is mostly demographic, and indicates the students' experiences with the L1 and the L2 as well as the lecturers' experiences and opinions with regard to Academic English. The demographic data presents a starting point in explaining the challenges students encounter in the education system of Swaziland and also situates the practices they bring with them to tertiary institutions. In the second section I discuss the findings from data extracted through the students' interview questions. In the third section I focus on an analysis of the students' essays and also incorporate grammatical findings from the interviews and questionnaires where students had to elaborate on responses they provided.

It is mainly the data in the third section that provides answers to the research question guiding the study: How does siSwati as an L1 influence the acquisition of Academic English? The research focus is based on my working assumption (as an English lecturer at a university in Swaziland) that students' writings at tertiary institutions are characterized by substandard forms of Academic English. It is my contention that the prevalence of these colloquial, non-standard forms mirrors the 'colloquial' as well as standard grammatical forms of the students' L1 which forms the foundation for L2 learning. Non-standard English in Academic English discourses seems to be a production of locality through peripheral normativity (Blommaert, 2010). I argue that there should be appropriate intervention programmes that need to be coordinated to correct the situation. I conclude the chapter by a section that relates the data to the research question and shows how the research question was answered by the data elicited.

6.2 QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

6.2.1 STUDENTS' BACKGROUNDS

A total of three hundred and fifty-one (351) students and nine (9) lecturers served as participants for the questionnaire data. Of the 351 student respondents, 35.6% were male while 64.4% were female. More females took part in the study because (I targeted nursing and teaching colleges in my research) and nursing and teaching are still strongly associated with females in Swaziland; hence it was to be expected that they would outnumber men. The age range of the student participants was 17 to 44, the average being 30.5 years.

Respondents from the William Pitcher Teachers' College ranged from 19 to 28 years, and 17 to 31 years from the Swaziland College of Technology. At the Ngwane Teachers' College the age range was 17 to 35. In the Faculty of Education at the Southern Africa Nazarene University the age range was 19 to 37. The fact that older students enrol for teaching can be explained by a number of factors:

- a) There are waiting lists of those who qualify to do teaching courses, but, because of limited spaces, are not admitted;
- b) Secondary school teaching is not a priority area in the Swaziland Government Scholarship Board;
- c) Some of these students could not qualify in their first applications; hence they had to upgrade their symbols to better grades in order to qualify for college education. Others have been in the teaching profession for a long time and want to upgrade their qualification from certificate to diploma level.

While one student was 44 years old, participants at the Faculty of Health ranged from the ages 17 to 36 with the highest concentration at 24 years. The health sector is a priority area in Swaziland as Swaziland is one of the sub-Saharan countries affected by many health problems, including prevalent HIV/AIDS. Young professionals seeking to study in the health sector are guaranteed a scholarship. One would expect there to be more students studying health-related issues, but only a few students pass the required science subjects such as Biology, Physics and Chemistry and Mathematics well enough in the Secondary School Leaving Certificate. For instance, the statistics available from the Exams Council of Swaziland (www.examsCouncil.org.sz) indicate an extremely low pass rate in SGCSE/IGCSE Physical Science, Combined Science, Biology, Mathematics and Additional Mathematics. Of the total number of university graduates in 2004 and 2005 only 9% became engineers (Marope, 2010, p. 83). Africa in

general, and Swaziland in particular, “produces far fewer science, mathematics, and technology-based professionals than other developing regions” (Marope, 2010, p. 83).

This means that, despite the nation’s quest for more scientifically inclined learners, there are few science teachers and that affects the pass rate in schools and restricts admissions in the colleges in and outside the country.

An analysis of the completed questionnaires in my study reveals that 59.3% of respondents were doing their first year while 40.7% were in their final year. 49.9% of the respondents were studying towards a Primary Teacher’s Diploma, 6.8% towards a Secondary Teacher’s Diploma, 18.5% towards a Commercial Teacher’s Diploma, 17.4% towards a General Nursing Diploma and 7.4% were studying towards a Bachelor’s degree in Microbiology.

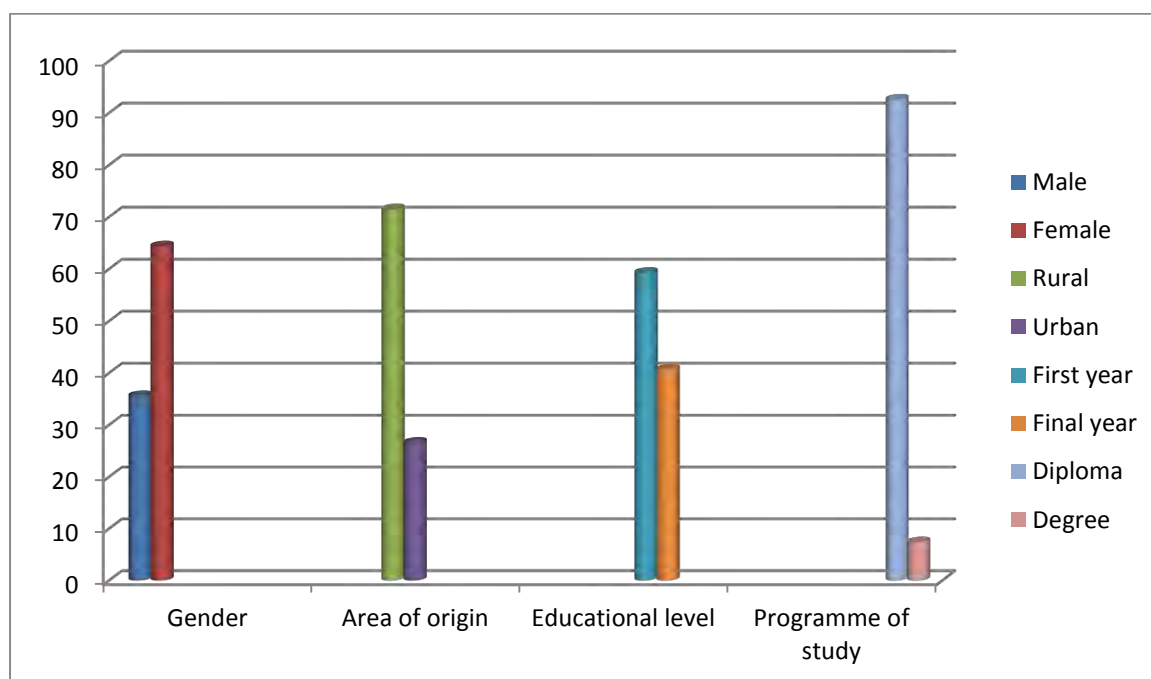
The student participants were all native speakers of siSwati and spoke English as an L2.

In terms of academic accomplishments in the two languages at high school, the data of this current study reveals that the students’ school leaving results had a credit rating of 83.5% in siSwati while English had only 63.2%. The students’ backgrounds are graphically represented in Figure 11 below.

From the demographic data presented below, it appears that the tertiary institutions in Swaziland that I targeted for this study draw the majority of their students from rural areas. While 71.5% of students indicated that they were from rural areas, only 26.6% indicated that they came from urban areas and 1.9% did not specify their areas of origin. These statistics seem to confirm Balarin’s (n.d.) observation that 76% of the population is rural and 24% is urban and further suggest that these students are from low-income households.

The large segment from metropolitan areas not joining local institutions could be attributed to the fact that they had attended the well-resourced schools which produced excellent high school leaving results. Their grades might have persuaded them to apply to universities and colleges abroad.

FIGURE 11: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN TERMS OF GENDER, EDUCATIONAL LEVEL, AREA OF ORIGIN AND PROGRAMME OF STUDY



The majority of students from rural communities have attended schools in communities that are largely disadvantaged in terms of infrastructure and learning resources. According to Blommaert (2005, p. 380), rural schools are plagued by a variety of societal and fiscal difficulties. In general, they are impoverished socio-economically and their English language infrastructure is limited (Setati et al., 2002, p. 130). This is echoed by Marope (2010, p. 91) who argues that secondary schools in rural areas tend to be weaker than schools in urban areas and this makes it difficult for even the talented children to qualify for university enrolment. It is these communities and schools that mostly feed the surveyed colleges and universities as only the best performers from these communities qualify for college education. The 26.6% from urban areas would include those who preferred local institutions, did not perform very well at the school leaving examinations, and those whose parents could not afford an education outside the country.

6.2.2 STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES WITH THEIR L1

The respondents were all L1 siSwati speakers from communities that were predominantly siSwati speaking. At home, 87.4% had started learning their L1 at infancy (1-2 years), 6.3% had started during preschool years (3-5 years), and 2.8% during primary school years (6-12 years). 3.5% did not answer. At school 12.5% had started learning siSwati during preschool years, 26.8% during primary school years, 37.4% had not learned it, 22.0% did not remember

and 1.3% did not answer. One who had learnt it later in his/her life attributed this to the fact that:

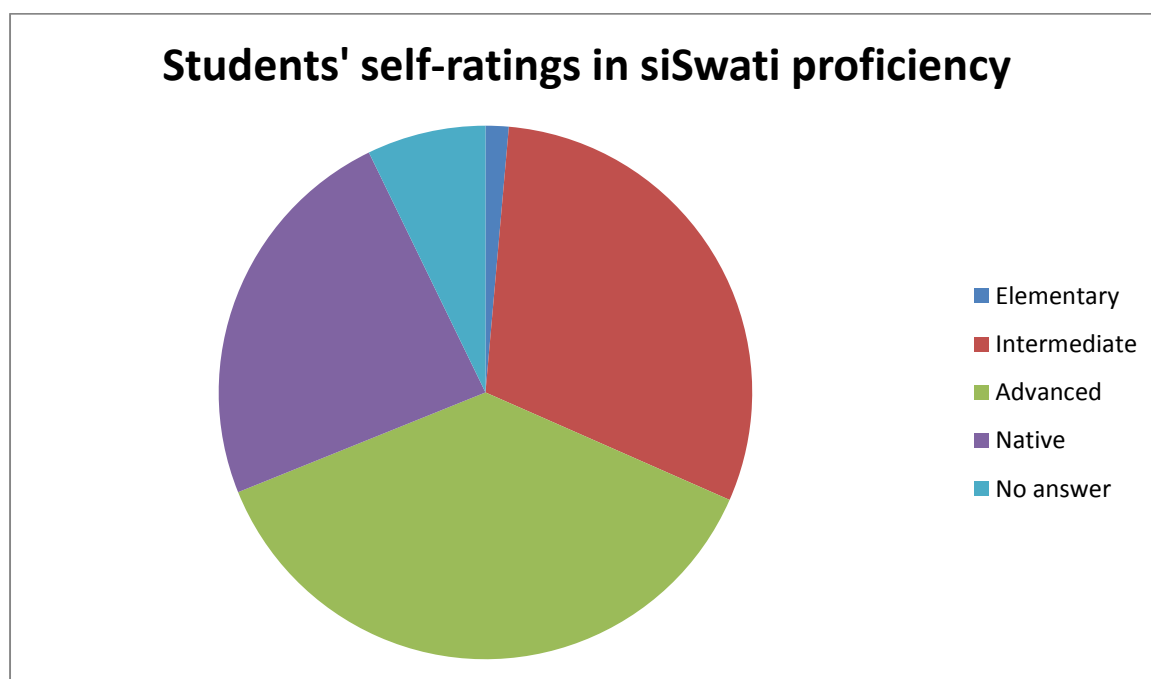
As a young child, it was difficult for me to learn my mother language since the environment and parent with family were living a modern life. Meaning there was less time for SiSwati, and mostly English was spoken. It took me time to understand SiSwati words than English language [sic].

When asked if they had encountered literature in siSwati as they grew up, 67.6% of respondents indicated that they had, 28.4% had not and 4.0% did not answer. 80.5% of those that indicated they had encountered literature had encountered it in the oral mode while 8.9% had encountered written siSwati literature, 2.4% had encountered both oral and written literature; 5.3% did not answer and 2.9% were unsure. This implies that the most common form of literature in the households was oral. The limited exposure to written literature in the L1 implies that the culture of reading was not common or was even non-existent in some households where the students grew up as siSwati L1 speakers, as even those who had had exposure to written literature ‘did not bother to read it’. If the culture of reading is not cultivated from a young age, it is difficult to enforce it at tertiary level: studies have shown that there is a direct link between early childhood development and later academic success (Campbell et al., 2001).

Scarcella (2003) and Lauren (2011) argue that when learners acquire a new language, a well-developed vocabulary is the foundation for its acquisition. If vocabulary development and manipulation has not been encouraged in the L1 via engagement with texts, how effective can the L2 learning be? In academic contexts, students must expand their reservoir of vocabulary through reading. If tertiary students were brought up in a culture where reading was not enforced or encouraged even in the L1, how can we expect it to be successfully implemented in the L2?

On rating their spoken proficiencies in siSwati, 23.9% of the respondents indicated that it was that of a native speaker and 37.3 % rated it advanced, while for 30.2% it was intermediate, and 1.4% had elementary proficiency, 7.2% did not answer.

FIGURE 12: STUDENTS' SELF-RATINGS IN SISWATI PROFICIENCY



When asked how they had learned their L1 to their current proficiency levels, 68.4% of the respondents indicated they had achieved their proficiency levels through a mixture of both formal classroom instruction and interacting with people at an educational institution and at home. 5.1% had learnt it at home only and 13.7% had learnt it through formal classroom instruction only. 7.1% had learned it only through interacting with people and 1.1% had learned it through other means. 4.6% did not answer.

In terms of exposure, 66.8% were exposed to speaking the L1 at infancy, 10.6% at preschool and 7.5% during primary school going ages. 15.1% did not answer. In terms of reading in their L1, 14% were exposed at preschool, 56.2% at primary school, 24.8 % did not answer, and 4.8% were not sure. In terms of writing in the L1, 15.5% were exposed at preschool, 63.7% were exposed at primary school, 19.5% did not respond, and 1.3% of students were not sure.

In terms of the years they had spent learning the L1, 14.2% indicated that they had spent less than ten years learning it, 28.3% had spent 12 to 14 years, 11.9% had spent 16 to 18 years and 42.9% had spent all their lives speaking and learning the L1.

Data also revealed that while 62.2% of the students spoke siSwati to their parents/guardians, 25.2% spoke both English and siSwati to them and 2.0% spoke English, siSwati and another language to them in the home environment. While none spoke only English with their parents, 0.4% spoke English and another language and 10.2% did not answer. With respect to the

languages parents were fluent in, 62.5% of the respondents indicated that their parents/guardians were fluent in siSwati and 23.2% indicated that their parents were fluent in both English and siSwati and 2.0% indicated that they were fluent in English, siSwati and one other language. While 0.4% indicated that that their parents were fluent in English only, 0.4% indicated that their parents were fluent in siSwati and another language. The same number of respondents indicated that their parents were fluent in another language and 11.1% did not answer. With respect to the language parents spoke to each other, 75.2 % of the respondents indicated that parents/guardians spoke siSwati to each other, and 11.4% spoke both English and siSwati, 0.8% indicated that they spoke English, siSwati and another language, 0.8 indicated that they spoke siSwati and another language, and 0.4% said they spoke only English. While another 0.4% of the respondents indicated that their parents spoke another language to each other, 11% did not answer.

When asked how frequently the students spoke siSwati on campus, 4.8% of them indicated they sometimes spoke siSwati with friends, 14.8% of them often spoke siSwati with friends, 57.3% of them spoke siSwati most of the time with their friends, and 23.1% spoke siSwati all the time with their friends on campus. 65% of the lecturers indicated that they sometimes spoke siSwati at the institutions of learning, 22.5% often spoke siSwati to their colleagues and 13% did not answer. While 9.7% of students admitted to speaking siSwati most of the time with their lecturers, 1.7% admitted to speaking it all the time to them and 0.9% did not answer. The frequencies with which students speak siSwati on campus and to lecturers are illustrated in Figures 13 and 14 below.

FIGURE 13: FREQUENCY OF STUDENTS SPEAKING SISWATI ON CAMPUS

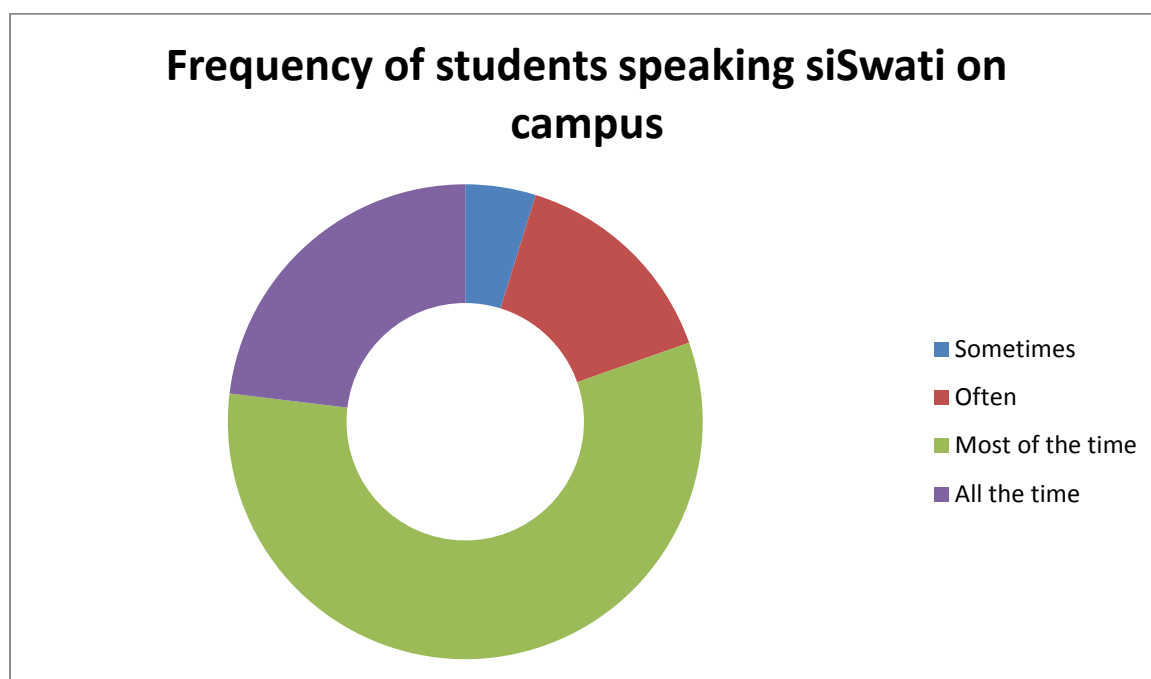
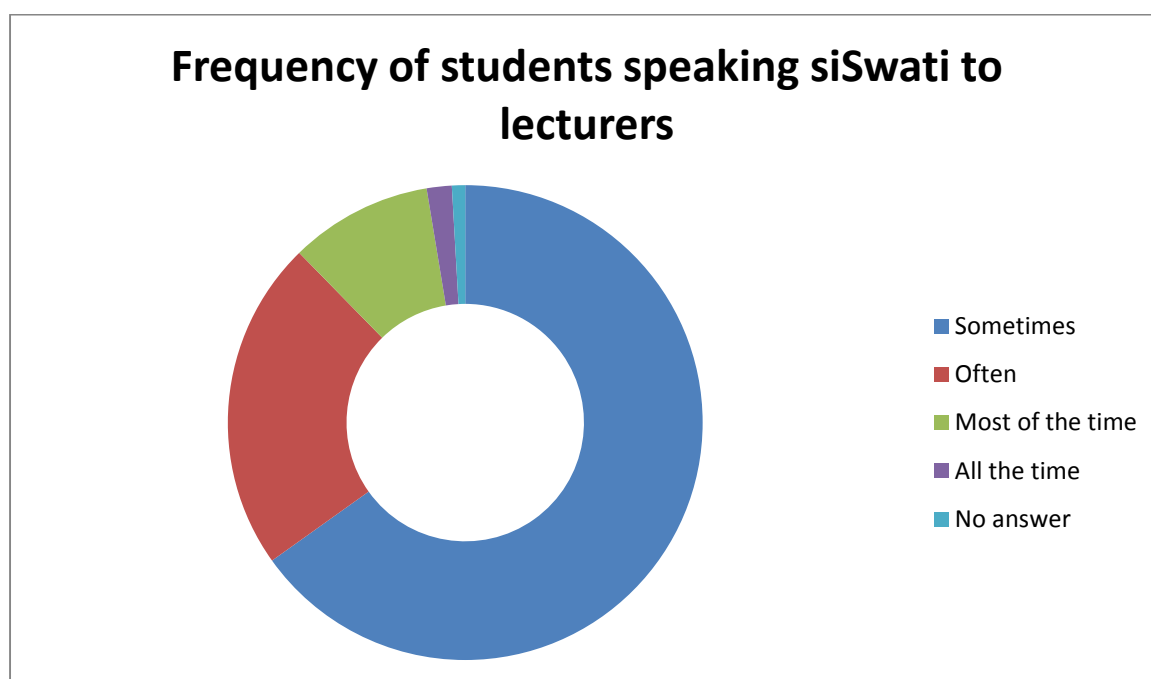


FIGURE 14: FREQUENCY OF STUDENTS SPEAKING SISWATI TO LECTURERS



The statistics above suggest that while siSwati is a popular code for domestic communication, it is less popular outside of the home environment. Similar trends are recorded by South African researchers. A study by Dalvit and De Klerk (2005) concludes that students at an Eastern Cape university consider English as linked to more prestige subjects while isiXhosa is seen as a less

important code that supplemented explanations in English mainly to students transitioning from high school to university education.

English was considered more appropriate to ‘crucial’ domains such as exams and to more ‘prestigious’ and empowering subjects such as Economics and Information Technology (Dalvit & De Klerk, 2005, p. 12).

Further, a study by Chick and Wade (1997, p. 273) describes English as the high variety used in most prestigious public domains and isiZulu as the low variety confined to less prestigious local community and domestic domains (Chick & Wade 1997). The same sentiments were shared by students of three universities in KwaZulu-Natal who felt that English was a vertical code (Gough, 1996, p. 57), more appropriate as a language of learning and teaching than was the horizontal²⁰ isiZulu at tertiary institutions.

6.2.3 STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES WITH THEIR L2

DOMAINS IN WHICH THE L2 WAS ACQUIRED

While all the participants were L2 speakers of English, they came from different linguistic backgrounds and had learnt English in different English language infrastructures (Setati et al., 2002). Some had learnt it in urban environments where the English language infrastructure was more supportive, as in urban areas, where as Setati et al. observed, there is far more environmental print (for example advertising billboards) in English. Teachers and learners in these environments have greater access to newspapers, magazines, television and to speakers of English (Setati et al., 2002, p. 130). Other learners had learnt English in rural schools where the infrastructure and resources were scarce. These different contexts had an influence on the acquisition of Academic English as indicated by respondents in their replies to the interview questions.

When asked at what age they had learnt their L2 at home, 55.8% indicated that they had never learnt English at home. 21.4 % had started learning it during preschool years, 12.3% had learnt it during primary school years, and 10.5% did not answer. At school 19.6% had started learning

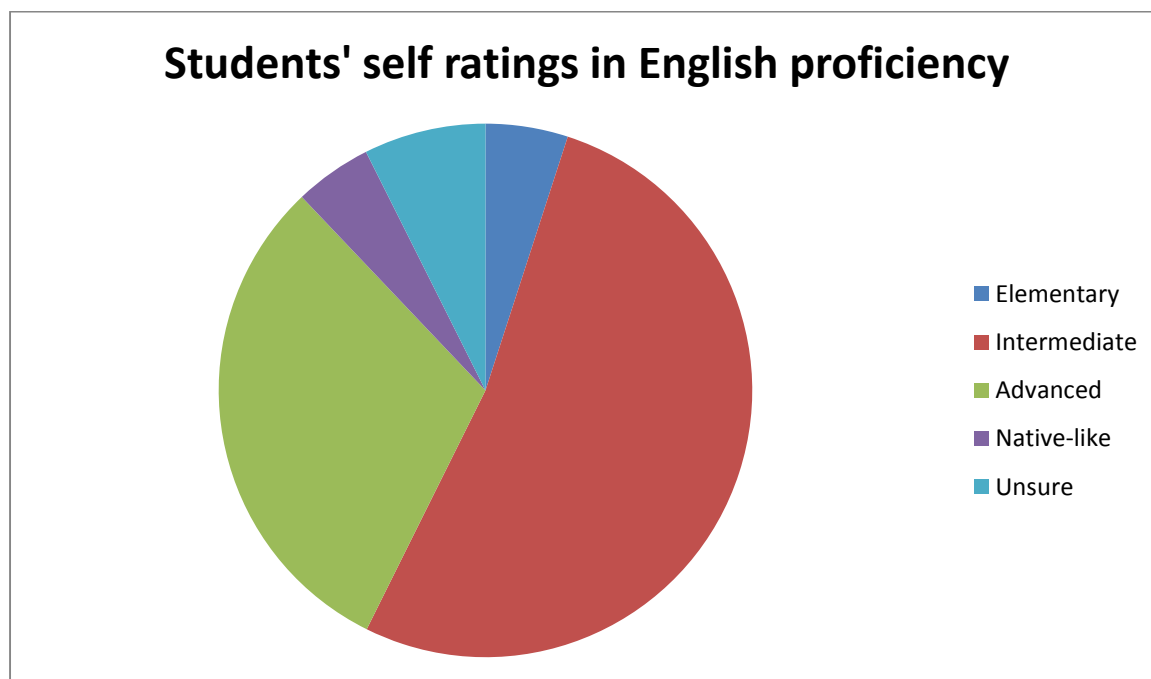
²⁰ A vertical code refers to the language of social access and mobility (Gough, 1996, p. 57). It is appropriate for learning and teaching, and is used in formal communication, science and business and it has prestigious status. The horizontal code is the L1; the language of social solidarity (Gough, 1996, p. 57). It is used in everyday communication especially among the Southern African indigenous languages.

English during preschool years, 57% started learning English between the ages of 6 to 8 yrs. 23.4% did not respond.

STUDENTS' SELF-RATING

The self-rating of their proficiencies in English varied. While 5% rated it elementary, 52.4% rated it intermediate, 30.6% rated it advanced, 4.7% rated it native-like and 7.4% were unsure.

FIGURE 15: STUDENTS' SELF-RATINGS IN ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

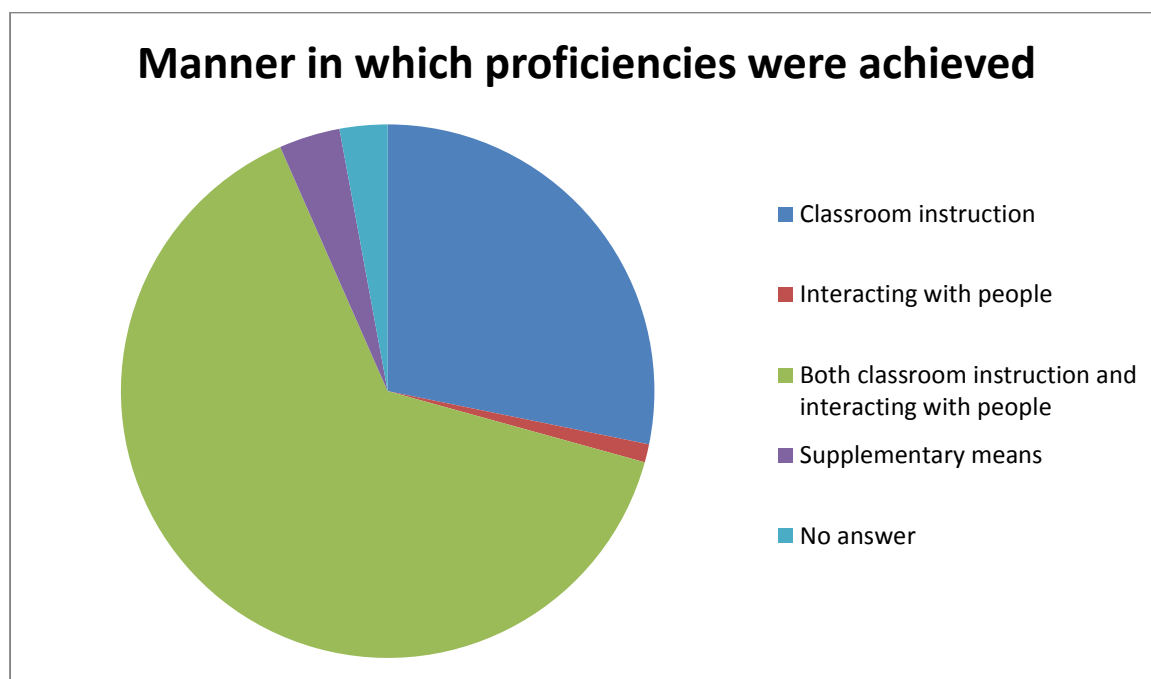


While the largest concentration in siSwati proficiency is at the advanced level (see Figure 12), in English it is at the intermediate level (see Figure 15). Unless one is majoring in siSwati, an advanced knowledge of the language is not a requirement for tertiary education in Swaziland. However, since an advanced level of English is required for tertiary education discourse, these figures would suggest that only 35% of the student population have the necessary skills in the L2 to engage meaningfully with academic resources in English (30.6% advanced and 4.7% native-like). The variation in the students' competences and proficiencies in the L2 further appears to demonstrate that lecturers in tertiary institutions were confronted with a group of learners with different learning and linguistic abilities. It further appears to imply that the onus to gauge the level of each learner's L2 and provide the necessary comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) was on them.

MANNER IN WHICH PROFICIENCY LEVELS ACHIEVED

When asked how they had learnt English to their current levels of proficiency, 28.2% had learnt mainly through formal instruction, 1.1% had reached such proficiency levels through interacting with people, while for 64.1% it was a mixture of both formal classroom instruction and interacting with people. 3.7% reached their proficiency levels through other supplementary means such as reading books, magazines, and newspapers, speaking the language and watching English television channels. 2.9% did not answer.

FIGURE 16: MANNER IN WHICH PROFICIENCIES WERE ACHIEVED



The highest concentration in the manner in which learners achieved their current proficiencies is classroom instruction and interacting with people. This seems to suggest that the major models of 'correct' language are the instructors, colleagues and other people that the students interacted with. Instructors specifically are the ones that provide input that is $i+1$ (Krashen 1987).

ENCOUNTER WITH LITERATURE IN ENGLISH AT HOME

When asked if they encountered any literature in English at home, 3.2% did not answer. While 40.1% had encountered literature in the form of newspapers, magazines and books, 56.7% had not encountered any literature in English at home (see page 133). This is almost exactly the same percentage for no encounter with siSwati literature at home which would suggest that these households were not print-rich and there was no reading culture in any language at home.

This seems to confirm Corum's (n.d., p. 2.1) observation that in Swaziland, as in most African countries, the written tradition is fairly recent but there is an ancient history of the oral transmission of knowledge and culture.

EXPOSURE TO ENGLISH OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

When asked how much exposure they had to English outside the classroom when they grew up, 19.7% indicated that they were widely exposed to English outside the classroom. However, while, 72.0% had minimal exposure, 2.8% had no exposure at all and 5.5% did not answer. Those who claimed minimal exposure only picked up English through brief contacts with Indian traders nearby their homes and this variety, while stimulating their usage of the L2, was also not standard.

The lack of exposure was also attributed to the absence of any need to speak English as no one spoke it at school. Those who had no exposure at all attributed this to the fact that there were no educated people at their homes. One respondent wrote:²¹

Where I come from its rural and many people speak siSwati, not English.
In the rural areas they are not playing with English, they are used at siSwati.

This implies that for 2.8% of Swazi students at tertiary institutions, the learning of English takes place largely within the classroom rather than via direct access to speakers of the language. According to Long's (1996) Interaction Theory, a language is acquired better in interactions between non-native and native speakers of the target language. He argued that the best conditions for target language acquisition were when learners interpreted and encrypted messages 'in the actual acts of communication' with native speakers. The native speakers modelled authentic language behaviours that facilitated the development of a learner's discourse competence.

In the absence of native speakers of English in Swaziland's tertiary institutions, one can conclude that the input and feedback students receive from their peers and instructors is secondary. As predicted in Chapter 2, feedback from peers is their interlanguage system and the input from both peers and instructors does not drive learners hard enough in their production and comprehension of Academic English. Such a situation does not, therefore, encourage them to try new forms or modify others, hence acquisition is inhibited.

²¹ Respondents' responses are quoted as they were given in their texts (mistakes and all).

In addition, the fact that the majority of students did not have access to English other than the classroom implied that the achievement of Academic English for them occurred in the macro-environment which was acquisition-poor (Ellis, 1990). Brutt-Griffler (2002, p. 164) defines the process of macro-acquisition as the kind of L2 acquisition that takes place in an educational setting that commences with the L1 before the introduction of the L2 and students have little (or no) exposure to native speakers of English, or varieties of English other than the English spoken by their teachers.

The environment described above does not allow learners to integrate the knowledge acquired with the external world that is socially mediated. Atkinson (2002) postulated that SLA was best promoted where learners would be placed in situations where the L2 was a necessary tool for survival and prosperity.

The minimal exposure to English outside the classroom, however, did not mean that students did not have any contact with English or that they had performed badly in the subject at school. Data elicited in this research indicates that learners in higher institutions in Swaziland did have contact with English, with 7.1% being so good at it that they had had obtained A symbols, 25.6% B symbols and 32.5% managing a C symbol in the school leaving examination. According to the ratings of the examining body in Swaziland, the Examinations Council of Swaziland, students who obtained symbols A to C were good and proficient in English.

OTHER LANGUAGES STUDIED AT SCHOOL

Respondents indicated that they had studied languages other than English and siSwati at school. 64.2% had studied French and 4.6% had studied isiZulu/isiXhosa. 1.3% had studied Afrikaans, 0.7% had studied Portuguese and 29.2% did not indicate the subjects they had studied.

ABILITIES IN THE FOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS IN ENGLISH

Students' ratings of their abilities in English varied. While 30.1% of the respondents claimed that they were very good at reading, 47.7% said they were good and 9.7% indicated that they were functional. 4.2% admitted to being fair and 8.3% did not answer. In terms of writing 11.5% indicated that they were very good and 36.3% said they were good. 17.7% admitted to being functional, 12.2% indicated that they were fair and 1.3% were poor. 21% did not answer. In terms of speaking, 14.2% claimed that they were very good, 39.4% said they were good, 21.7% admitted to being functional, 16.4% said they were fair and 2.2% indicated that they were poor. 6.1% did not answer. In terms of comprehension, 11.1% said they were very good,

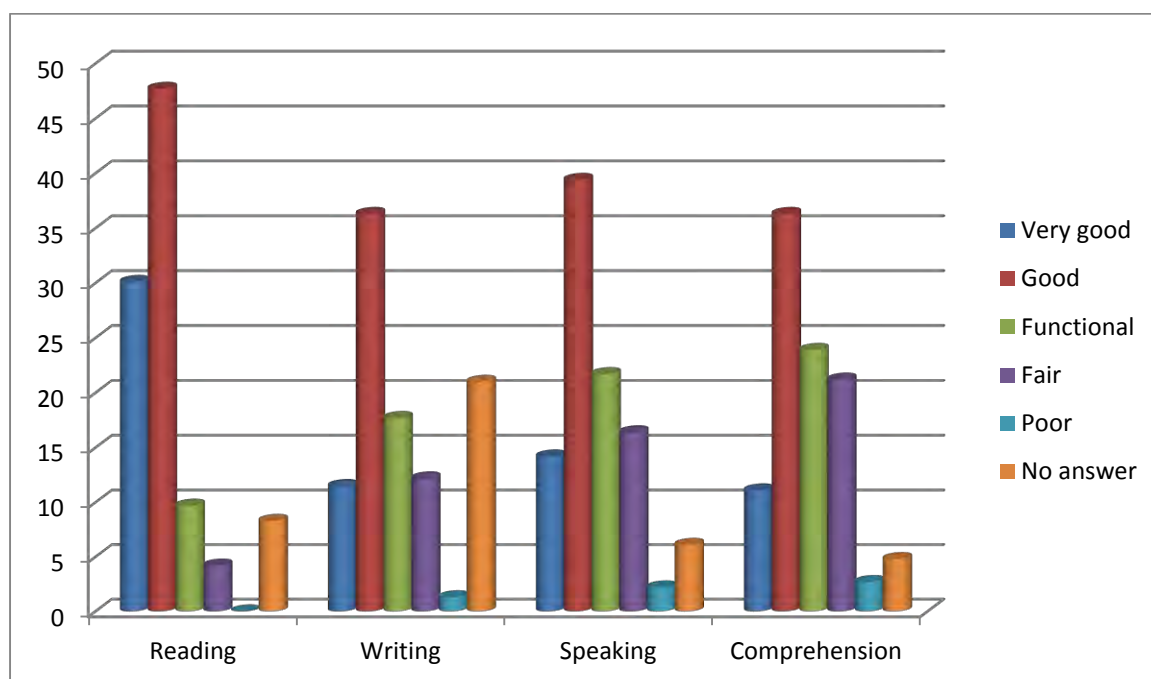
36.3% were good, 23.9% admitted to being functional, 21.2% said they were fair and 2.7% were poor. 4.8% did not answer.

Of note is that in all the four language skills, the highest concentration is on 'being good' in English and this seems not to correspond with the ratings of their proficiency levels in English, where the highest concentration was at the intermediate stage. If the majority are at the intermediate stage in their proficiency of English, one would have expected that the highest concentration in their abilities in English to be on the functional level. Students' self-ratings of their abilities in the four language skills in English are shown in Figure 17 below.

In rating their abilities in the four language skills in siSwati, 73.9% indicated that they could read, and 26.1% did not answer, while 69.2% indicated that they could write, and 30.8% did not answer. 72.6% indicated that they could speak, and 27.4% did not answer. 71.6% indicated that they could understand siSwati, and 28.4% did not answer.

Of the total 73.9% that could read siSwati, 44.6% indicated that they were very good and 21.7% felt that they were good; 4.5% were functional, 3.1% fair and no students indicated that their reading skills in the L1 were poor. In terms of writing, of the total 69.2% that could write in siSwati, 35.3% were very good, 25.5% were good, while 4.8% were functional, and 3.5% were fair. None was poor. In terms of speaking, of the total 72.6%, 44.9% were very good, 20.1% were good, 5.9% were functional, and 1.7% were fair. None was poor. In terms of comprehension, of the total 71.6%, 25.6% were very good, 32.5% were good, while 7.6% were functional, 5.9% were fair and none was poor.

FIGURE 17: STUDENTS' SELF-RATINGS OF THEIR ABILITIES IN THE FOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS IN ENGLISH

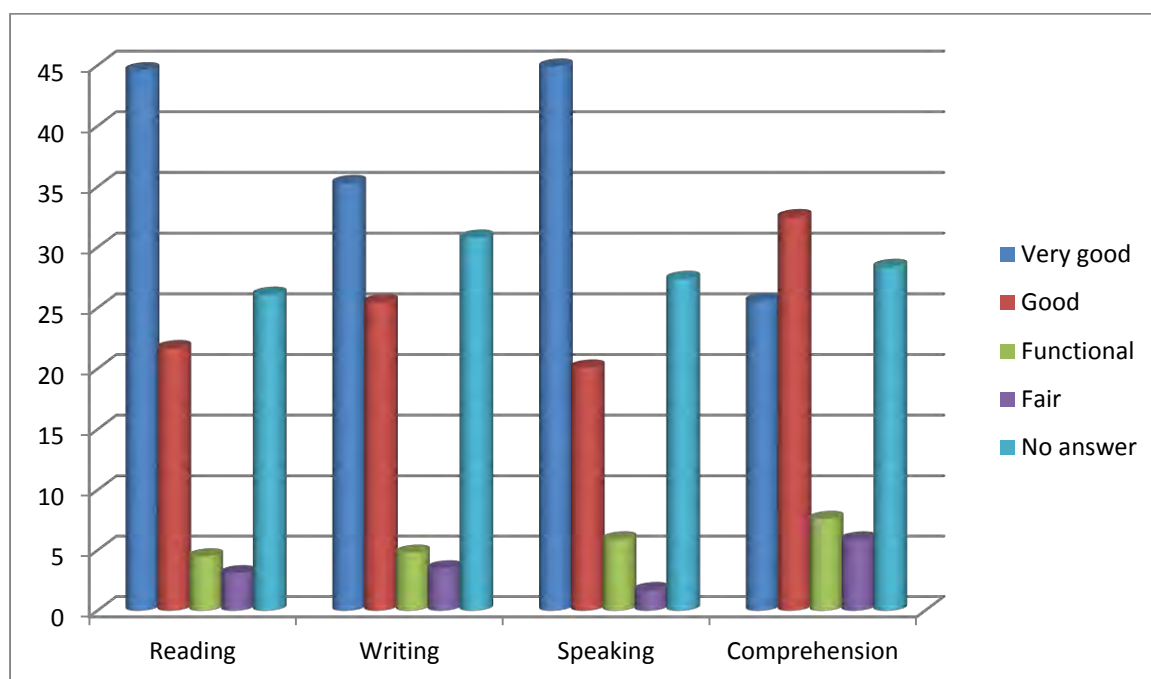


STUDENTS' SELF-RATINGS OF THEIR ABILITIES IN THE FOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS IN SIswATI

The statistics on students' self-ratings of their abilities in reading and writing seem to confirm the correlations Stotsky (1983) had found between reading and writing in the L1. She had found that better writers tended to be better readers and if one considers the above statistics the proportion of those that are good, functional and fair at reading siSwati has almost similar distribution with those who are good, functional and fair in writing the L1. Students' self-ratings of their abilities in the four language skills of siSwati are shown in Figure 18 below.

In rating their abilities in the four language skills in other languages (apart from siSwati and English) they had studied, students were only able to credibly rate their skills in French. In terms of reading proficiency, 3.8% indicated that they were very good in French and 16.5% were good. While 25.3% were functional, 34.2% were fair and 20.2 were poor. In terms of writing proficiency, 1.4% were very good, 10.1% were good, 17.7% were functional, 44.3% were fair and 26.5% were poor. In terms of speaking proficiency, 1.3% were very good, 9.0% were good, 15.1% were functional, 44.3% were fair, and 30.0% were poor. In terms of comprehension proficiency, 3.7% were very good, 11.4% were good, 15.1% were functional, 35.4% were fair, and 32.9% were poor. 1.5% were unsure.

FIGURE 18: STUDENTS' SELF-RATINGS OF THEIR ABILITIES IN THE FOUR LANGUAGE ABILITIES OF SISWATI



ABILITIES IN THE FOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS IN FRENCH

In Portuguese and Afrikaans, all the respondents indicated that they were poor in all the four language skills. For those who had indicated that they knew isiZulu or isiXhosa, all indicated that they were merely functional. Students' self-ratings of their abilities in the four language skills in French are shown in Figure 19 below.

While the students rate their abilities in the four languages as fairly good in English and very good in siSwati, they are predominantly fair in French. The Interdependency Theory (Cummins, 2000; Hornberger & Baker, 2001) posits that a strong foundation in one language enables the development of another and the knowledge and skills learned in one language are transferable to the second. According to Cummins (2000), learning an L1 facilitates the acquisition of an L2 as the L1 functions as the bedrock on which the target language is learnt. This is as a consequence of languages having a common underlying proficiency (CUP). Literacy-related aspects of a bilingual's proficiency in the L1 and L2 are seen as common. This means that literacy skills developed in one language strongly predict corresponding skills in another language acquired later in a learner's life. According to Cummins (2000, p. 38), CUP

“refers to cognitive/academic proficiency that underlies academic performance in both languages” and the transference of skills apply to both related and unrelated languages.

FIGURE 19: STUDENTS’ SELF-RATINGS OF THEIR ABILITIES IN THE FOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS IN FRENCH

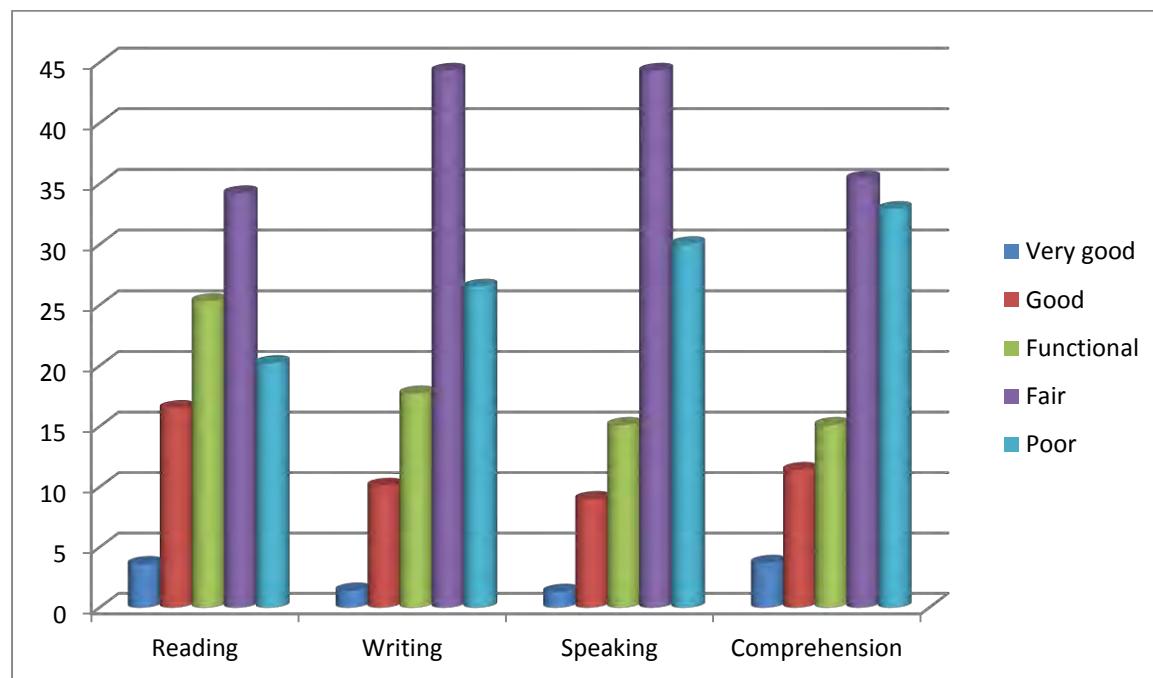


FIGURE 20: STUDENTS’ SELF-RATINGS OF THEIR ABILITIES IN READING IN ENGLISH, SISWATI AND FRENCH

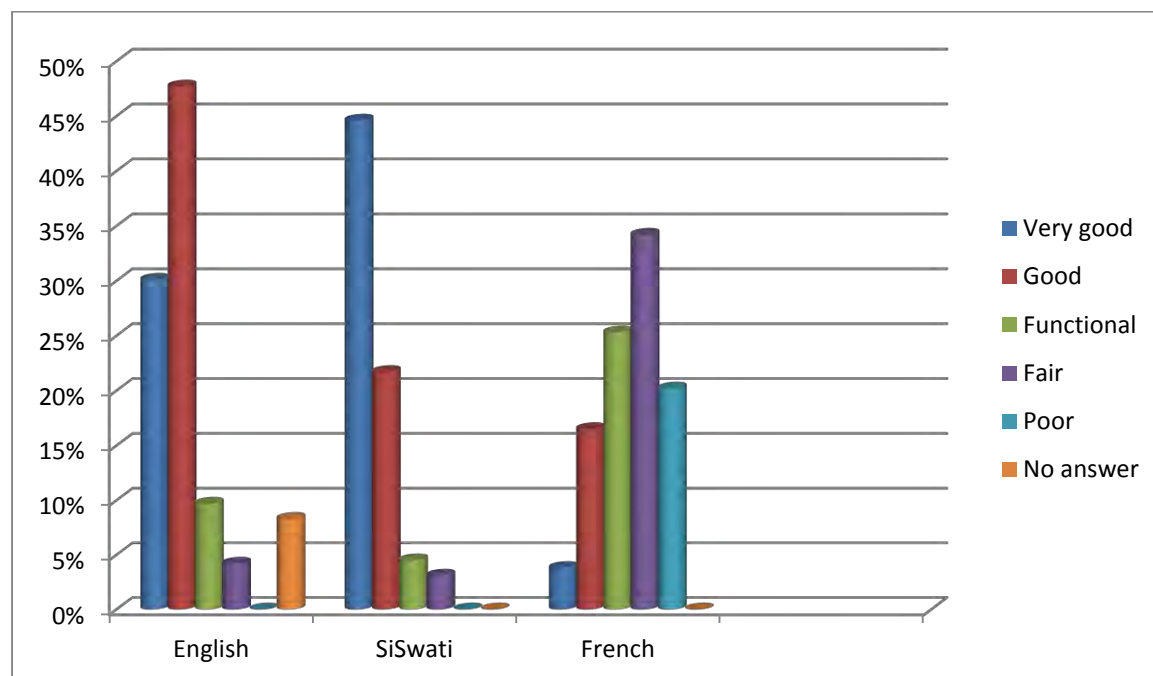
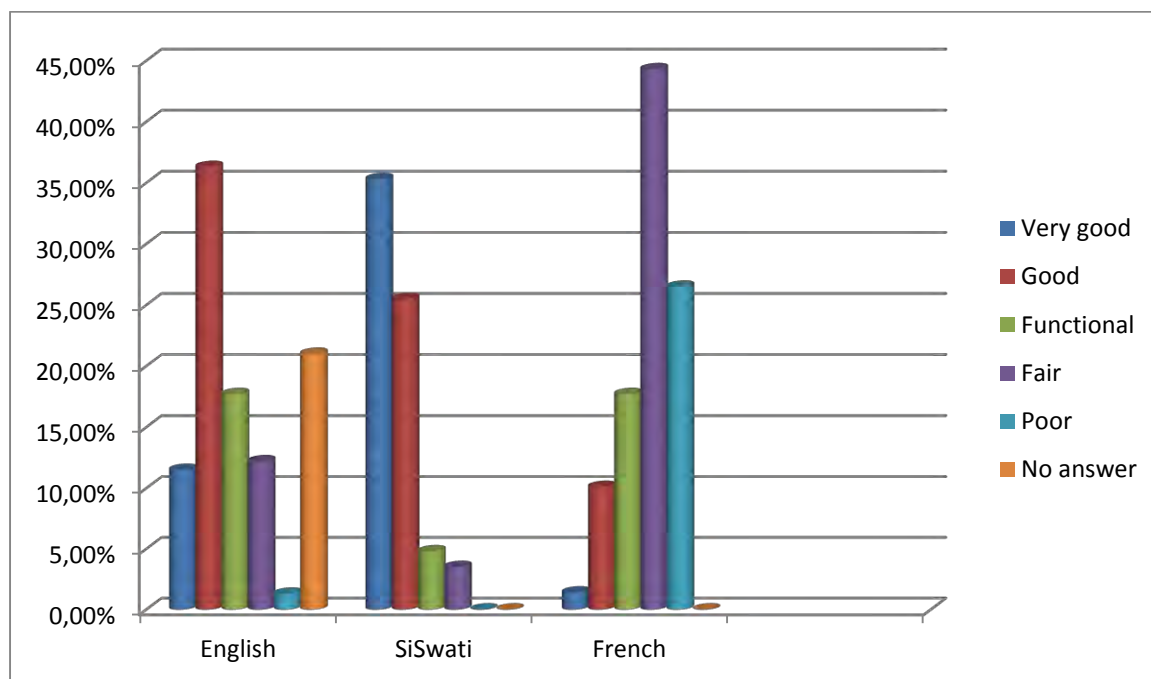


FIGURE 21: STUDENTS' SELF-RATINGS OF THEIR ABILITIES IN WRITING IN ENGLISH, SIKWATI AND FRENCH COMBINED



The research under analysis in this study indicates that the disparity between the competency levels in siSwati and English is explained by students' admission that they seldom encountered the written word in their L1 at home. This fact would suggest that literacy skills in the L1 (particularly reading and writing skills) were in fact not well-developed, and this later retarded the development of these competencies in the L2. Therefore, while Cummins' Interdependency Theory argues that literacy skills are transferable between languages, the statistics in English, siSwati and French seem to refute this claim. The statistics in these two languages does not show the correlation between the students' L1 and L2 literacy skills, yet the students have been in situations where they have had the opportunity to develop literacy in both languages. If the Interdependency Theory is anything to go by, why is it that the students appear better in siSwati than they are in English and the other languages?

While 30.1% indicated that they were very good at reading English, 44.6% claimed the same for siSwati and only 3.8% for French. While 11.5% admitted to being very good in writing in English, 35.3% admitted the same for siSwati and 1.4% for French. While 14.2% admitted to being very good in speaking English, 44.9% admitted the same for siSwati and 1.3% for French. While 11.1% admitted to being very good in comprehending English, 25.6% admitted the same for siSwati and 3.7% for French. If literacy skills were transferable between languages, one would expect that if students were very good in one skill in one language, the same would be true of the other as the interdependency theory proclaims.

The above statistics indicate that respondents were better in reading, writing, speaking and comprehension abilities in their L1 than they were in their L2 and the other languages they had studied at school. While students had indicated that the environments they grew up in were rich in siSwati input, it appears that this input was primarily oral, and this meant that they could not adequately transfer the skills between the languages studied. The gaps in reading and writing the L1 led to inefficiency in acquiring these skills in the L2.

AGES AT WHICH RESPONDENTS WERE EXPOSED TO THE FOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS IN ENGLISH

In terms of speaking, 43.1% were exposed to English as the L2 during their pre-school years, and 44.2% were exposed during their primary school years. 12.7% did not respond.

In terms of reading, 30.9% indicated that they were exposed to English at preschool age, while 62.1% were only exposed during primary school years. 7% did not respond.

In terms of writing, 20.1% were exposed to English during preschool years and 66.5% during their primary school years. 13.4% did not respond.

YEARS SPENT LEARNING ACADEMIC ENGLISH

In terms of the years they had spent learning Academic English, 35.3% indicated that they had spent 12 to 14 years, 21.9% had spent 16 to 19 years. 42.8% had been learning English (but not specifically Academic English) since childhood and were still learning it

PEOPLE WITH WHOM THE L2 IS SPOKEN AND ENVIRONMENTS WHERE IT IS SPOKEN

When asked about the frequency with which they interacted in English on campus, 47.1% of students indicated that they sometimes spoke English with their friends, and 30.5% often spoke English with friends. While 15.5% spoke English most of the time, 5.2% spoke English all the time when on campus with their friends and 1.7% did not answer.

7.0% indicated to sometimes speaking English to lecturers, and 8.4% often spoke the language to them. 57.3% spoke English most of the time to lecturers, 22.7% spoke it all the time to lecturers and 4.6% did not answer. Figure 22 illustrates the amount of time students spoke English among themselves and Figure 23 shows the amount of time they spoke English with lecturers.

FIGURE 22: AMOUNT OF TIME STUDENTS SPOKE ENGLISH AMONG THEMSELVES

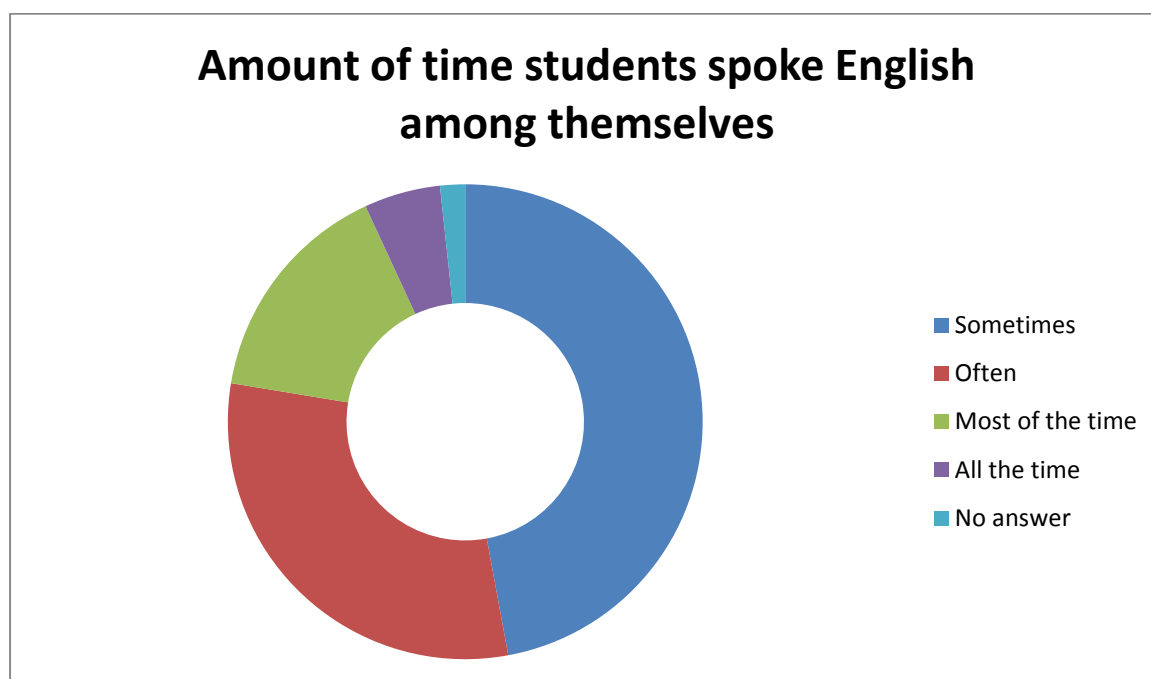
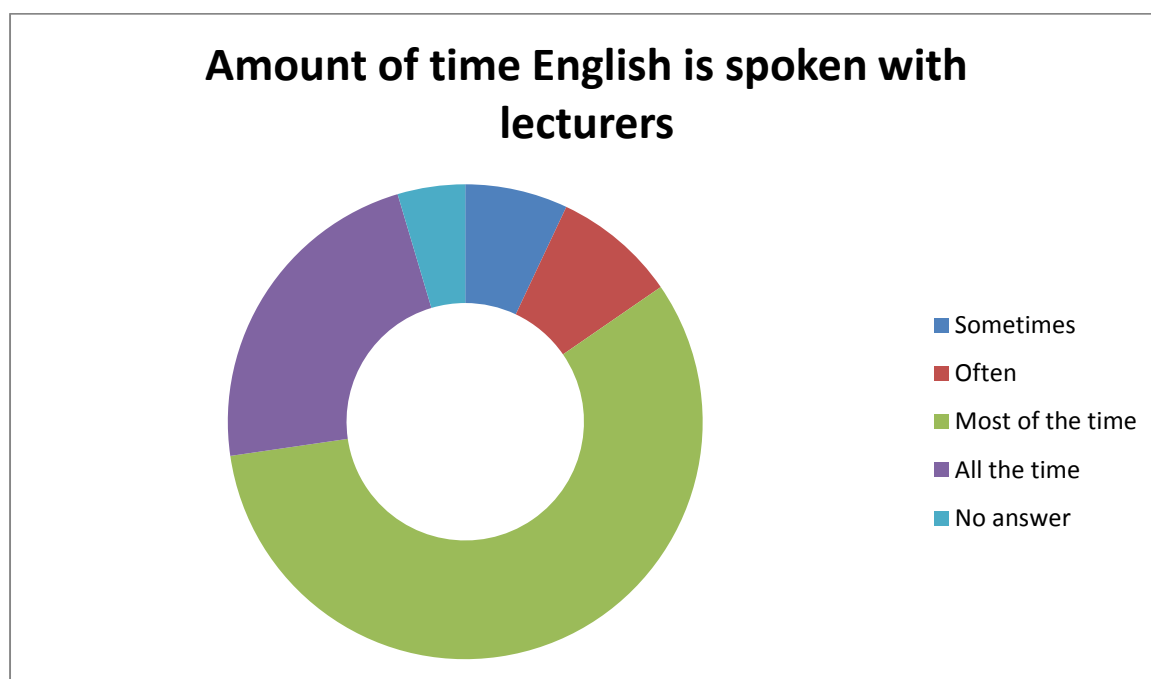


FIGURE 23: AMOUNT OF TIME ENGLISH IS SPOKEN WITH LECTURERS



MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AT SCHOOL

The language in which participants received instruction at school was predominantly English. While 32.7% received instruction at preschool in English, 15.7% received it in both English and siSwati, and 39.8% received it only in siSwati. 11.8% never attended preschool.

At primary school level 51.5% of instruction was in English and 25.1% was in both English and siSwati. 12.5% of the instruction was only in siSwati. 10.9% of the students were unsure.

At secondary/high school 74.4 % of instruction was in English, 13% was in both English and siSwati, 0.4% of instruction was only in siSwati. 12.2% of the students did not answer. At college, while 74% of instruction was in English, 6.3 % was in both English and siSwati, and 1.2% in siSwati only. 18.5% of the students did not answer.

FIGURE 24: MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AT PRESCHOOL

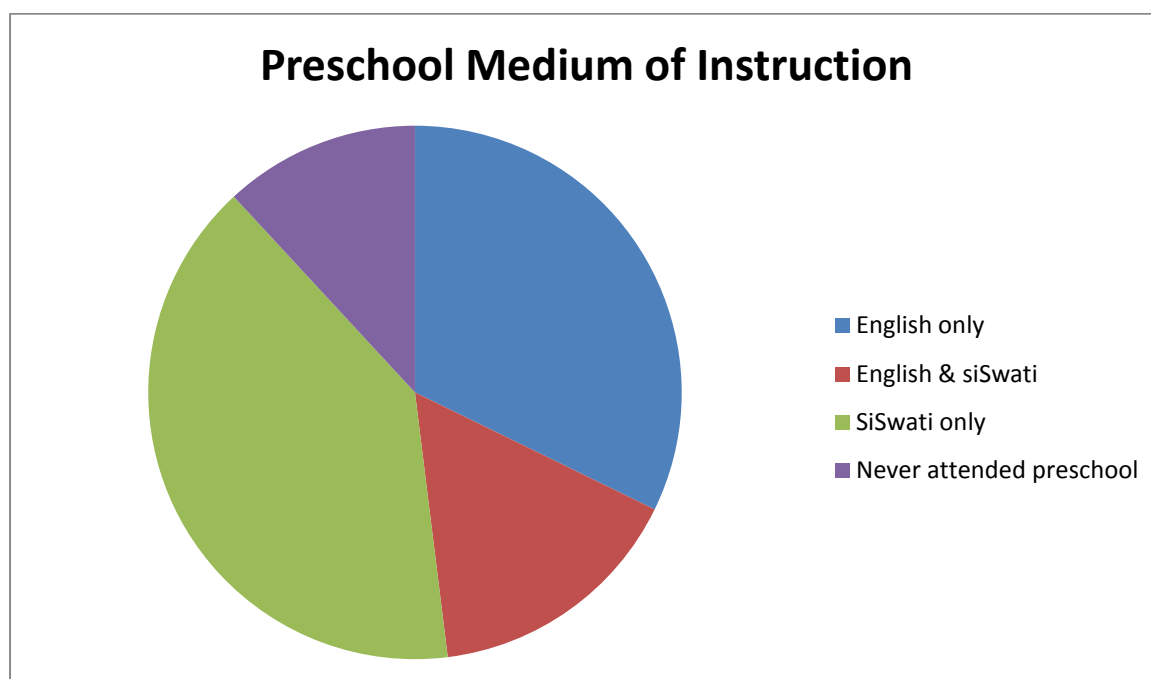


FIGURE 25: MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AT PRIMARY SCHOOL

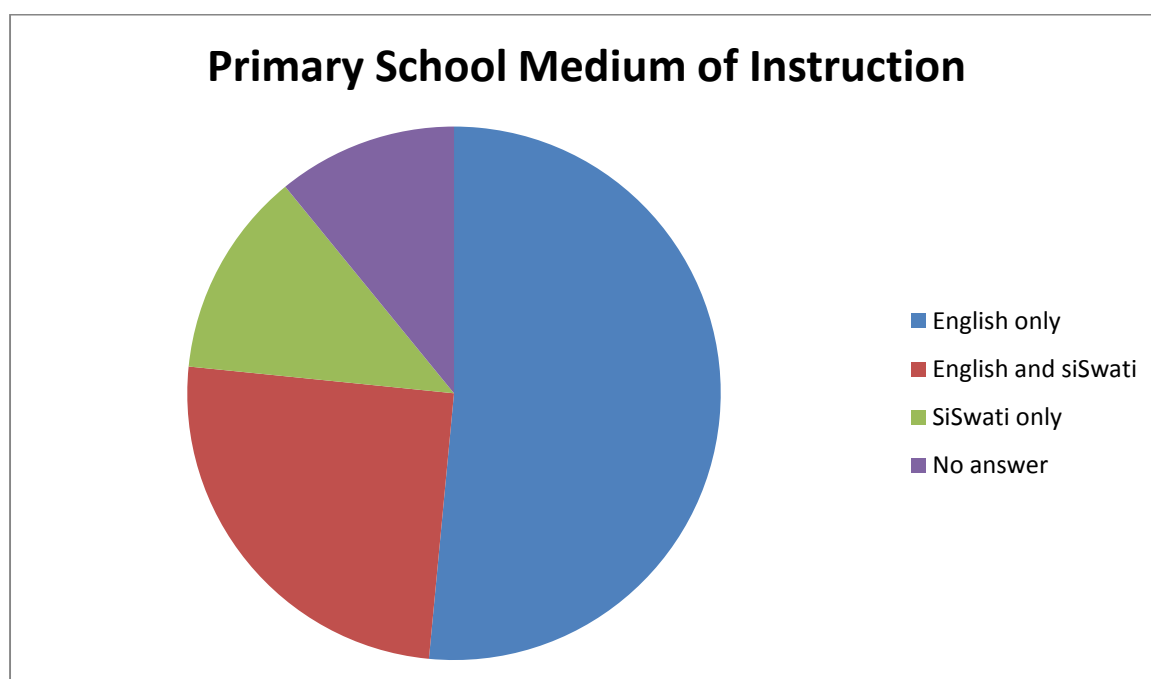


FIGURE 26: MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AT SECONDARY/HIGH SCHOOL

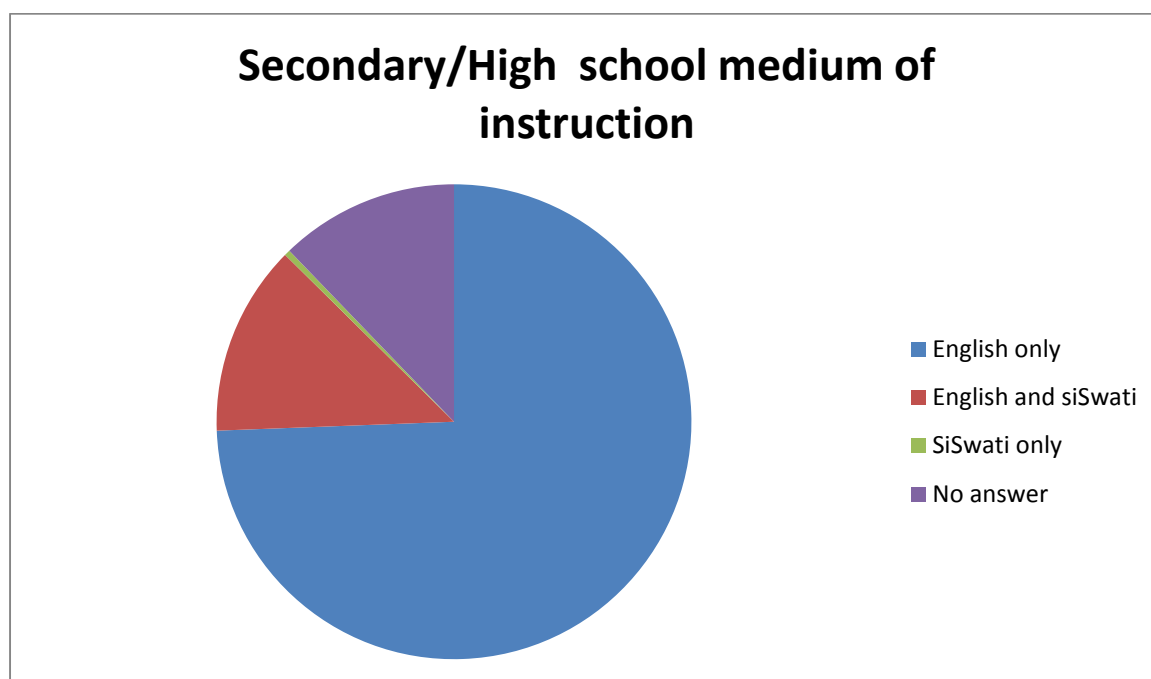
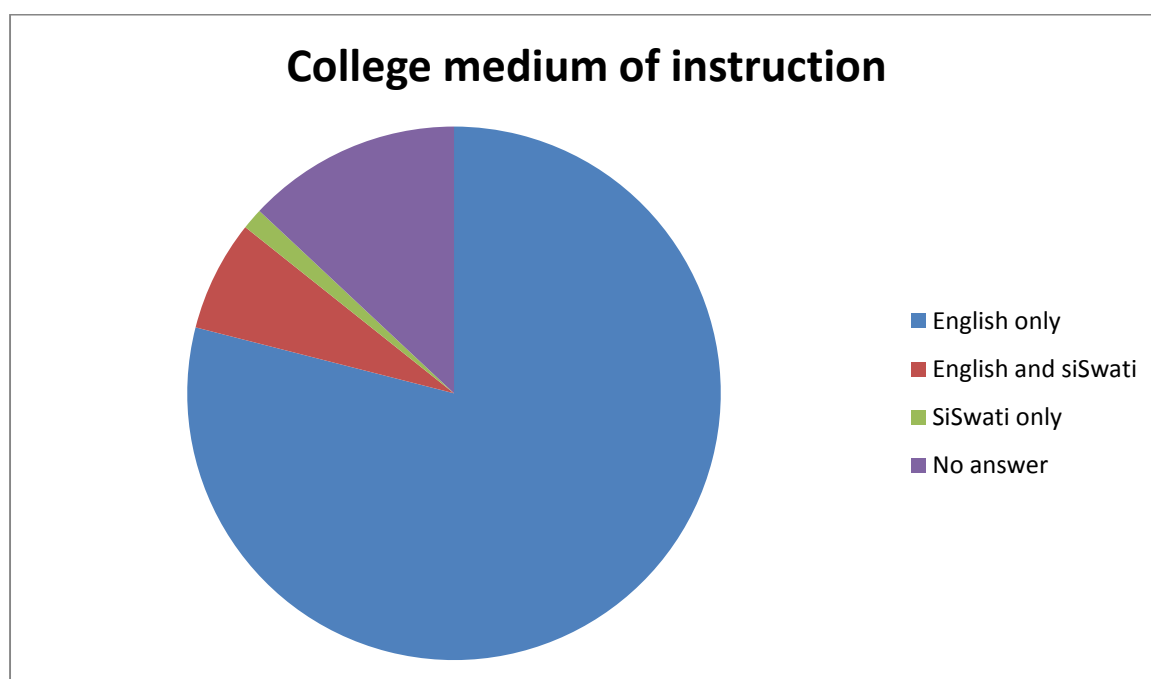


FIGURE 27: MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AT COLLEGE



CODE-MIXING IN ORAL COMMUNICATION

Respondents attested to generally mixing codes in speech. While 82.1% of the students switched between codes when speaking, 8.3% claimed they did not and 9.6% did not answer. The reasons students gave for code-switching were:

- a) failure to express oneself in one language, giving a clear meaning which could not be achieved in the target language;
- b) being stylish;
- c) siSwati being limited in terms of vocabulary with some siSwati words being difficult to pronounce and to find an equivalent for in English;
- d) forgetting what to say in English;
- e) inability to find the correct word in English;
- f) always thinking in siSwati before translating those words to English;
- g) code-switching being a linguistic habit.

To quote a few students by way of illustration:

I think it is the environment and the way we live today.

Its involuntary/automatically happening without notice. Sometimes is because I think in siSwati before I translate it in English.

It is the lack of lexical vocabulary and being in a situation of speaking while thinking what you have to say.

Some words are difficult and we don't know them in English.

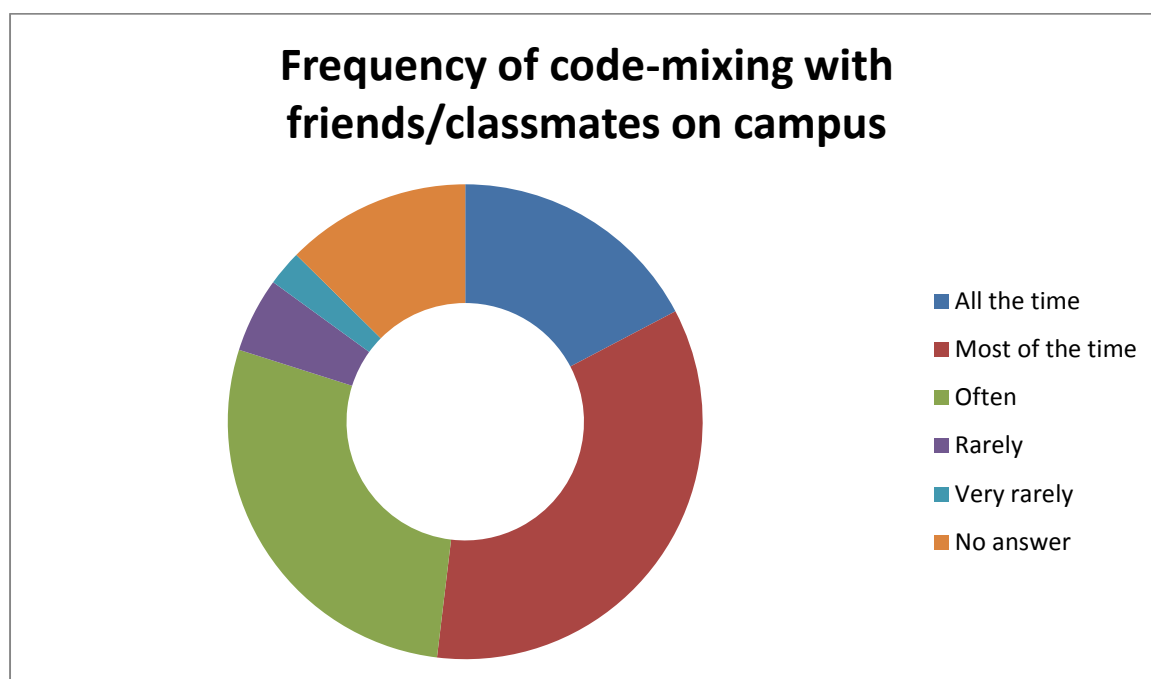
FREQUENCY OF CODE-MIXING WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE

The frequency with which students mixed codes varied. While 13.4% mixed codes all the time with family members, 20.1 % mixed most of the time, and 22.0% mixed codes often, 14.6% rarely mixed codes, and 17.7% very rarely mixed the codes. 12.2% did not answer.

THE FREQUENCY OF CODE-MIXING WITH FRIENDS/CLASSMATES ON CAMPUS

With friends and classmates, 17.3 % mixed codes all the time and 34.6% mixed codes most of the time. While 28% often mixed codes, 5.1% rarely mixed codes, and 2.4 % very rarely mixed codes. 12.6% did not answer.

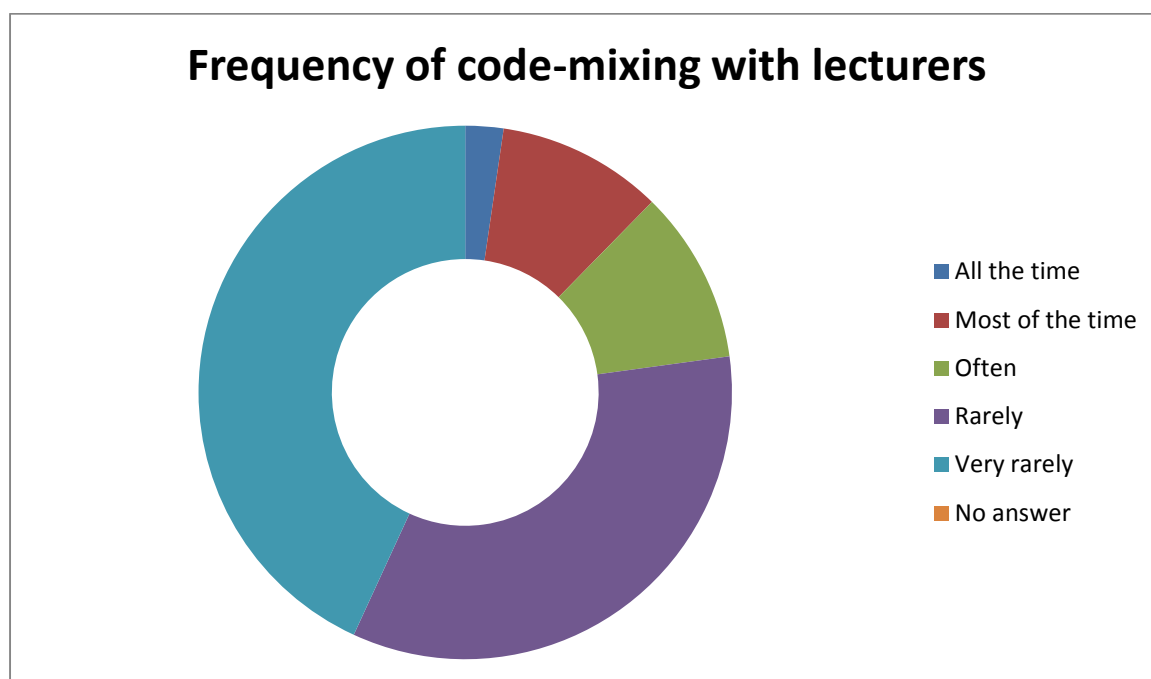
FIGURE 28: FREQUENCY OF CODE-MIXING WITH FRIENDS/CLASSMATES ON CAMPUS



FREQUENCY OF CODE-MIXING WITH LECTURERS

With lecturers, 2% of the students mixed codes all the time and 8.7% of them mixed codes most of the time. While 9.1% of the students often mixed codes with lecturers, 29.5% of them rarely mixed codes with their lecturers and 37.4% of them very rarely mixed codes with lecturers. 13.3% of the students did not answer. The incidence of code-mixing was higher among the students with their classmates as compared to that with the lecturers.

FIGURE 29: FREQUENCY OF CODE-MIXING WITH LECTURERS



PREFERRED LANGUAGE MEDIUM IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS

When asked about the language of preference in different situations, 73.5% preferred using siSwati at home, 4.3% preferred using English, 1.7% preferred using both languages at home, 1.1% preferred using other languages other than English or siSwati and 19.4% did not answer.

At school, while 8.3% preferred using siSwati, 80.1% preferred using English, 3.1% preferred using both and 8.5% did not answer. At a party, 44.7% preferred using siSwati, 29.1% preferred English, 14.8% preferred using both, 2.0 preferred another language, and 9.4 did not answer.

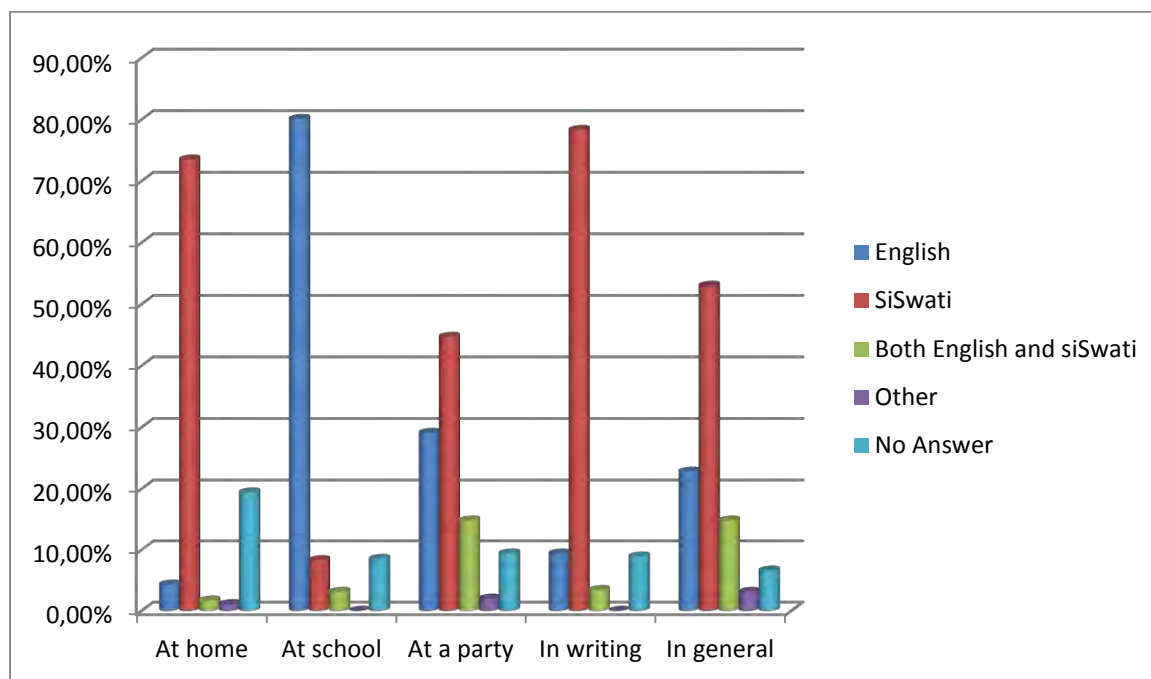
LANGUAGE MEDIUM PREFERRED IN WRITING

With respect to writing, 9.4% preferred using English, 78.3% preferred siSwati, 3.4% preferred using both and 8.9% did not answer.

GENERALLY PREFERRED CODE

In general, 53% of the respondents preferred using siSwati, 22.8% preferred using English, 14.8 % had no preference, 3.1% preferred a language other than English or siSwati, and 6.3% did not answer.

FIGURE 30: PREFERRED LANGUAGES IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS



The statistics show that students communicate least in English among themselves but often use English with their instructors. The statistics also seem to illustrate the predominance of siSwati in environments that are not academic and further confirm the vertical nature of English and the horizontal one for siSwati.

6.2.4 LECTURERS' BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCES

Of the nine lecturers who took part in the survey, two were male and the rest were female. All of them were adequately qualified to teach at tertiary institutions as three of them had a B.A. degree, one a B.A. Honours degree and five had Masters degrees. All the lecturers were native speakers of siSwati who spoke English as the L2.

On rating their students' English language skills, 22.2% of the lecturers rated them as very good in reading, while none rated them very good in writing, speaking and comprehending English. 44.4% of the lecturers rated their students as functional in reading English, while 33.3% rated them as fair. In written English 22.2% rated them as good, 33.3% rated them as functional and 44.4% rated them fair. In spoken English 33.3% rated them as good, 55.6% rated them as functional, and 11.1% rated them fair. In comprehending English the students were rated good by only 22.2% of the lecturers while 44.4% rated them functional, and 33.3% rated them fair. The lecturers' ratings of student competencies in English are shown in Figure 31 below.

While students rated their abilities as generally good in the four language skills, their lecturers' ratings evaluated them as merely functional. It could be argued, however, that the lecturers' ratings seem to correspond with the students' own ratings of their proficiencies in English as intermediate. Looking at the competencies in the language skills, this study observes that students are better skilled in siSwati than they are in English or any other language. This seems to suggest that while the majority had no written literature in either language, the siSwati-rich input environment must have significantly impacted on their ability to acquire all skills in the L1.

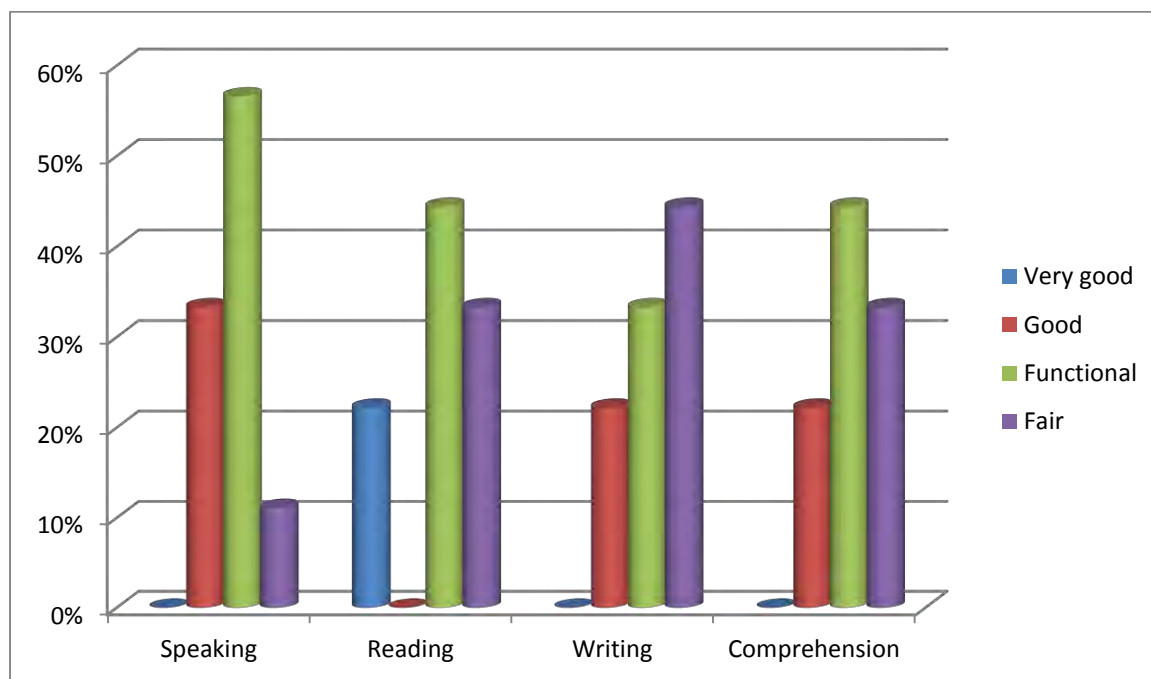
FREQUENCY OF ENGLISH USE BY STUDENTS WITH LECTURERS AND CLASSMATES

Asked about the frequency with which students used English with individual lecturers, 33.3 of the lecturers indicated that students very rarely use English with them, 11.1% indicated that they rarely used English, and 44.4% did not answer.

With their friends and classmates, students were said to very rarely use English by 11.1% of the lecturing staff. While 11.1% of the lecturers indicated that the students used English with others most of the time, 33.3% of them indicated that the students used English all the time with their friends and 44.4% did not answer.

On the frequency with which students used English with lecturers in general, 11.1% of the lecturers indicated that students very rarely used English, 11.1% of the lecturers indicated that the students rarely used English and 11.1% of the lecturers indicated that they often used English. 22.2% of the lecturers indicated that the students used English most of the time and 44.4% did not answer.

FIGURE 31: LECTURER RATING OF STUDENT COMPETENCIES IN ENGLISH IN THE FOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS



CODE-MIXING AND CODE SWITCHING IN THE CLASSROOM

All lecturers conceded to mixing and switching between²² codes in the classroom although 33.3% of them indicated that their students rarely mixed codes with them. 22.2% of the lecturers indicated that students often mixed codes with them, 22.2% indicated that students mixed codes with them all the time and 22.2% did not answer.

With other classmates, 22.2% of the lecturers indicated that students rarely switched codes, 22.2% indicated that students switched codes with classmates most of the time, 44.4% indicated that students switched codes with classmates all the time, and 11.1% did not answer.

The frequency of students' mixing codes with lecturers is represented in Figure 29, and the lecturers' ratings of students frequency of co-mixing is represented in Figure 33 below.

²² See 6.4.5.1 in this chapter for the differences between code-mixing and code-switching

FIGURE 32: FREQUENCY OF STUDENTS' CODE-MIXING WITH LECTURERS

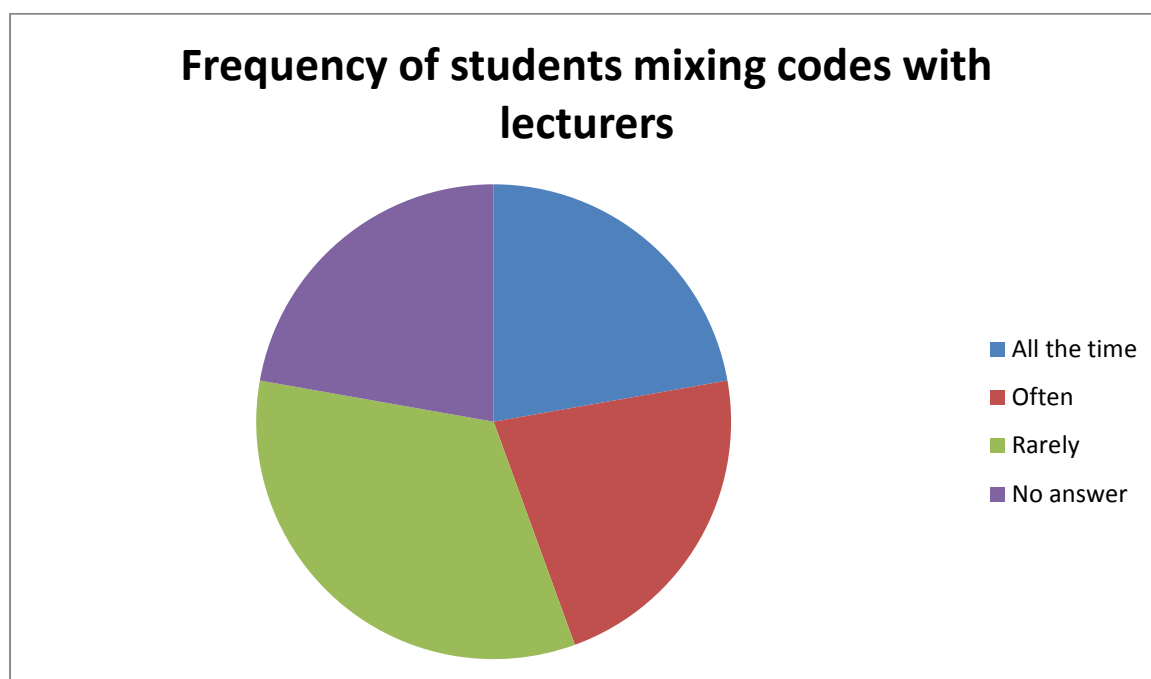
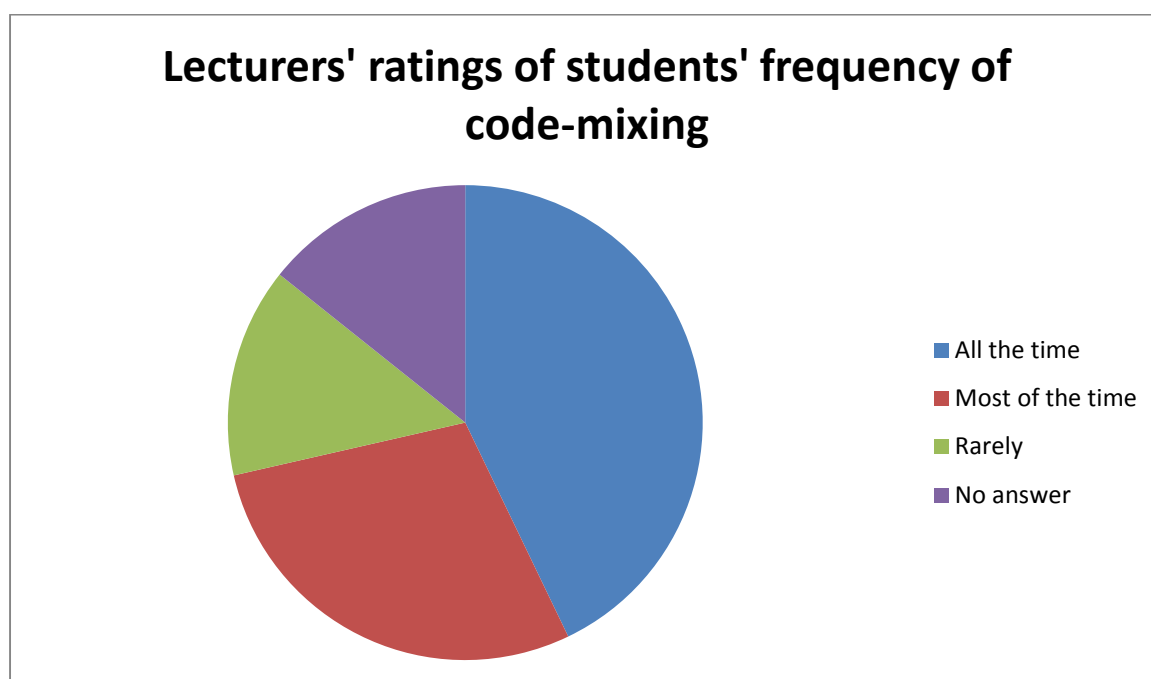


FIGURE 33: LECTURERS' RATINGS OF STUDENTS' FREQUENCY OF CODE-MIXING



In general 22.2% of the lecturers indicated that students very rarely switched codes with them, 44.4% indicated that the switch was often, 11.1% indicated that the switches were most often and all of the time respectively and 22.2% did not answer.

The frequency of switching and mixing codes as shown in Figures 28, 29, 32 and 33 demonstrates that the prevalence of code-mixing is higher among students as compared to

student interactions with lecturers. This seems to suggest that while some students realize the need to speak English in order to improve their proficiencies in English and carry the practice of speaking English with lecturers from high school to tertiary institutions, some do not.

REASONS FOR CODE-MIXING BY LECTURERS

55.6% of the lecturers conceded to mixing codes in the classroom and seemed very sympathetic with the students not understanding concepts articulated in the L2. The reasons they gave for switching and mixing codes ranged from not knowing why they switched or mixed the codes to:

I just find myself doing it. Sometimes it depends on who I'm talking to.
 ... clarifying concepts so that the students can understand better.
 ... being vividly understood.
 When I run short of vocabulary I change to my native language.

Lecturers described code-switching as using the L1 in class:

- a) to explain or clarify a linguistic concept;
- b) to maintain order;
- c) to emphasize important ideas;
- c) to create a light moment;
- d) as something they did by habit.

These descriptions seem to confirm a range of surveys on the communicative value attached to code-switching (Adendorff, 1996; Chick & Wade, 1997; Gough, 1996, McCormick, 2002b; Setati et al., 2002). Instructors use code-switching as a contextualization cue, to make content accessible, to involve students, to show power, to manage a class, to relieve tension and to build a relationship with their students, thereby confirming the value attached to this resource. Among themselves, students in this study indicated that they mixed codes to talk like those around them, to convey and clarify thoughts and concepts and to stand out.

While all the lecturers switch between codes, none of them admitted to using only the L1 throughout the entire lesson. 11.1% spent 50-80% of their time using English and 33.3% spent 80-99% of the time using English. The rest (55.5%) did not indicate how much of the time they

spent using English. This seems to confirm the vertical nature of English and that it is the medium of instruction in higher education.

LECTURER COMMENTS ABOUT STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ENGLISH PROFICIENCIES

When asked to rate their students' proficiencies in Academic English, only 11.1% indicated that the students' proficiency was advanced, with the majority (88.9 %) being deemed to have an intermediate level of proficiency.

The lecturers' ratings of the students' proficiencies correspond with their ratings of the students' abilities in the four language skills and the students own ratings of their proficiencies. This seems to suggest that learners in institutions of higher learning in Swaziland are on average at the intermediate state of Academic English proficiency. According to the lecturers, the intermediate level in the students' proficiencies necessitates specifically targeted interventions to improve their Academic English before the students graduate. The reasons lecturers gave for this were articulated thus:

Some students struggle when speaking or writing [English] which shows that they have a problem understanding... concepts.

Students should be in a position to write work in standardized English not clouded by so many grammatical errors [so that] by the time they leave the institution, they must have proficiency generally expected from a college graduate which would enable them to go on and further their studies.

Besides, where some students will teach in the private schools, they will find different nationalities, so English is expected most of the time as the medium of instruction.

When asked if they offered any activities that forced the students to speak, write and read in Academic English, 88.9% of the lecturers indicated that they believed there was sufficient English input covering all of the language skills. 11.1% did not answer. One lecturer indicated that:

Activities that promote the language skills are given both in class and in the curriculums and through discussions, presentations and assignments.

Of the 88.9%, 12.5% indicated that it was the reading and writing inputs that were sufficient as they had few contact hours with the students who also tended not to speak a lot thus making the lessons teacher-centred. They also indicated that the input was not adequate as the students themselves tended not to give much attention to Academic English claiming that it was not their area of specialization. That it was so was evidenced by the negative attitude some students had towards Academic Communication Skills.

When asked how they met the needs of their students in their Academic English classes, contrary to what 28% of the students alleged, lecturers indicated that they:

- a) give them work to enable them to practice a variety of activities from a range of topics;
- b) teach and conduct remedial lessons and address concepts ...students have problems with;
- c) expose them to situations where they have to use Academic English;
- d) lead by example in using the necessary [jargon] when needed and explaining them fully to them.

To ensure that the students spoke, wrote and read in Academic English, lecturers indicated that they taught academic communication skills and that their students spoke, wrote and read in Academic English. They also involved them in debates and class discussions and assessed their work via tests and assignments, and activities such as reading and oral presentations. They did all the above because 66.7% of them believed that the best way to learn Academic English was practising communicating in the language frequently and by engaging students in a variety of activities. While 11.1% thought contextualizing, role play and demonstrations by the teacher and learners were the best ways to learn Academic English, 22.2% believed there was no best way. One lecturer pointed out that:

Various strategies should be used to teach students the correct usage of Academic English, ...there is no one size fits all.

With the low intermediate levels of proficiency in English at tertiary institutions, lecturers believed that there were intervention strategies that could be put in place to correct the situation. These included changing the admission policy. Students should be admitted to tertiary institutions on condition they had obtained a credit pass in English at high school and it was suggested that the institutions where they were admitted should introduce courses that would address the specific language needs of students at tertiary institutions as this was beyond Academic Communication Skills and high school English.

Lecturers also felt that not only was the introduction of elements of literature in English as part of the syllabus necessary, but also stressed the importance of language development workshops for both students and lecturers alike. Lecturers should be engaged in English refresher courses.

Of note was the opinion that institutions of higher learning offering Academic Communication Skills should collaborate and draw up an action plan, share information on teaching strategies and how to cultivate the culture of reading among students. Finally, lecturers felt that institutions of higher learning could improve their infrastructures by refurbishing libraries and providing the necessary books in both the L1 and L2. However, one lecturer who had a different opinion concluded the survey by pointing out that:

English should take a lead because all subjects in institutions are taught in English, even siSwati. If Swazis are not proud of their language, let them be proudly English. If [siSwati] does not help us anywhere (e.g. getting a Commonwealth Scholarship) let it be taken as a support language rather than an official one.

6.3 EXTENDED OPEN-ENDED WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

The extended open-ended written questionnaire data witnessed a drop in the number of respondents from 351 to 349. The extended open-ended questionnaire data lent support to the questionnaire data by showing that tertiary students in Swaziland are siSwati L1 speakers and L2 speakers of English who all learned English in a formal setting.

How did you learn your L1?

When asked how they learnt their L1, respondents explained the process as being natural: they simply listened and imitated those around them, particularly parents and siblings. Others indicated that it was via trial and error where the parents would correct them when they mispronounced words in interactions. Respondents wrote that:

I learnt my mother tongue through listening and imitating the words I usually hear my relatives surrounding me say. My mom used to teach me how to pronounce some words, and their meanings when I was at the two word stage of language acquisition;

As my socialisation increase I acquired the language many other people who were around me speak;

Nobody taught me, it happened naturally.

What variety of siSwati do you speak?

72% of students attested to speaking Standard siSwati. The reasons cited for their certainty of their Standard siSwati ranged from the fact that they spoke it fluently and were understood by

everyone wherever they went. They had also learnt it at school and were taught by qualified teachers who had practised it for years.

However, 28% of respondents admitted to not speaking Standard siSwati because they were from the Shiselweni region where they mixed siSwati with isiZulu. As such they spoke differently from those from Lobamba or the Hhohho region. Others grew up in the eastern part of Swaziland and could not communicate or pronounce words like the people from Lobamba. The dialectal variation seems to confirm Corum's (n.d., p. 2.3) observation that establishing the orthography of siSwati was difficult because many sounds in the language are pronounced differently according to the different regions of the country.

While the dialect that is commonly accepted as standard is that of Lobamba, including Mbabane, other respondents claimed that their siSwati was not standard because they were born in townships where the 'deep' siSwati is not spoken and where English was the medium of communication. For these students, their siSwati was a mixture of both English and siSwati.

At school level were you taught siSwati linguistic features such as nouns, plurals of nouns, verbs, tenses, aspect, moods, etc?

All the respondents agreed that they were taught linguistic features in siSwati, particularly linguistic analysis.

How do we form the progressive aspect of a verb in siSwati?

While all respondents had been taught the linguistic features of their L1, 97.2% could not explain how the progressive aspect was formed in the language. Responses included:

We were taught that it is a doing word;
We use the final part of a word;
I don't know what this is.

Only 2.8% were able to give plausible responses such as:

We use the progressive implication formative /-sa-/ between the subjectival concord and the radical to express an incomplete action or a state in progress.

Were you taught idiomatic expressions in siSwati?

All the students agreed that they had been taught idiomatic expressions at school, but unlike with the formation of the progressive aspect, 95% were able to give the correct equivalence of the proverb **Once bitten, twice shy** when asked what the equivalence of the proverb was in

siSwati. This would suggest that the students' interests are more on the pragmatic use of the L1 at school and that they pay insufficient attention to grammar.

Can you read and write in siSwati?

In both the questionnaire and extended open-ended questionnaire data, all respondents indicated that they could read siSwati and had learnt reading in the L1 both at preschool and primary schools (if these were attended).

How did you learn to read in siSwati?

The students indicated that they were taught to read by their literate parents and older siblings who were already at school.

Do you think the way you speak, write and read siSwati has any influence of the way you speak, write and read in English?

Having started reading at the average age of six years, respondents pointed out that siSwati did influence the way they spoke, read and wrote English. They self-reflecting that the influence ranged from poor pronunciation, word for word translations, poor vocabulary and code-mixing to constructing English sentences with poor syntax. This was shown in written responses such as:

...the way I pronounce English words, sometimes pronounce them the siSwati way. Also when making a sentence you find that I first think it in siSwati then English, thus making it to be wrong in English;

When one comes across an English word, the easiest way to understand that word is to first find its meaning in our mother tongue;

Yes, I sometimes translate SiSwati words to English. In order for me to understand well it has to be translated to the mother tongue first;

Yes it has influenced, in the fact that sometimes we write or speak English in a direct SiSwati translations due to the fact that at most times we speak SiSwati and we found it difficult then to speak English in a proper way thus, eventually we break the language;

Yes, because naturally I am a Swazi and whenever I want to say anything I must say it or think it in SiSwati and translate it into English.

One of the reasons cited by those who believed their siSwati did not influence their English was that there were no one-to-one equivalences in the two languages, and as such:

Even if your vocabulary is broad in siSwati; you will find that you cannot express/translate that vocabulary in English.

Amount of English literature and conversation encountered outside of the classroom environment

With regard to their L2, English, respondents indicated that very little (or no) speaking in English went on in their households. This was attributed to the illiteracy of their parents and the fact that:

I was born in rural areas where you hardly hear any English in the community;

It was terrible poor, the reading of English in my home when I grew up. There was none except the holy book that no one use it even my parents did not use it, they use wip the dust only. ... The school did not have school librery and the town was too far, I visit it once a year and you not know with thing called librery until we reach the High school that was better, the mind was grown but scared to use it. There were no even a single dictionary at home.

From these responses it is clear that many students spoke and read English only at school and the only reading material available were school textbooks. Going to the library was not a habitual activity, two respondents pointing out that:

There was no library until high school but we were not used to it as there was no scheduled time for it, so after school we had to rush home.

As I grew up I only read notes on my exercise books.

For others there was not even a library in the vicinity. Those that read and spoke English at home attributed that to the efforts of their educated parents, some of whom were teachers who compelled them to read and spoke to them in English. In such families there were English books and newspapers in the house. One respondent noted:

My dad would read it [the newspaper] daily and most books I would lend from the library.

Contrary to the availability of reading material in some households, some parents did not allow the learners to read this material for fear of it being damaged, and the respondents themselves did not bother to read these texts even when they were at their disposal. This came out in responses such as:

There were books but dad didn't allow us to touch them, they were his, he thought we would tear them.

There were little books but I did not bother to read even a single one. I hate reading books although I sometimes used to look for words which I do not know in the dictionary.

Naturally I hate reading book for a prolonged time so what I do I listen a lot to either English or America speakers and try and practice it.

There was English books in the house, but I felt tired to read them; My parents did not at any time read books at home.

What is your understanding of Academic English?

A few respondents seemed unable to conceptualize what Academic English was, but for most there was clearly a basic understanding of the concept although they struggled to express it articulately. Their definitions included responses such as:

It is the English learned at school, in literature, not slang;

Academic English is the English that one needs to acquire in order to be able to write and speak using standards set for academics;

It is the language that is learned at school which is universal – by universal I mean even at the states of America, they are taught this English, this enables one to be able to communicate in all countries;

It is the English that is used by students and is determined by their profession or its related to the course they are studying.

Can you tell me how you learned Academic English at high school and later at a tertiary institution?

Respondents indicated that at high school they had learned Academic English through formal classroom instruction and through reading novels and magazines (indicating a lack of real understanding of what is meant by ‘academic’). Some had found it interesting and challenging. While 76% conceded that Academic English was taught at first year at tertiary institutions in Academic Communication Skills (ACS), 34% of respondents felt that it was not. Those that attested to it being taught at tertiary level found it too easy, not challenging and not motivating enough. Respondents claimed to be taught skills they were taught at high school such as writing compositions, letters and paraphrasing hence responses such as:

Boring, I don’t understand why should I be learning something which I have been learning since pre-school...; it’s like you don’t know English anymore because you are taken back to writing summaries and articles...; it looks so stupid ... we are tertiary students, we feel like we are not in a level of learning English.

However, others found it exciting, and explained that:

We take it as a bonus course since there is only key basis of English which we did at high school.

Have you ever had frustrations in learning Academic English?

The learning of Academic English had come with some frustrations to respondents. At high school one such frustration was that while they were taught by Swazis [L2 speakers of English], they were assessed by L1 speakers of English in the reading comprehension examination. At tertiary level the frustrations included failure to express themselves clearly, wrong

pronunciation, lack of understanding, repeating material done at high school, failing to obtain good marks, and at times, instructors not marking their work.

How were your needs, if there were any, of Academic English met in your classroom?

In their learning of Academic English, 72% of respondents felt that they did not have any needs. The fact that students did not feel they had any Academic English needs is significant. Studies on international students at English universities suggest that these students are aware of their language requirements and the universities respond to these with specific interventions (Andrade, 2006). Findings from my study suggest that students do not have a sense of how critical it is to become fluent in Academic English, because if they had, they would have listed particular needs.

Students' reluctance to express their needs might be attributable to the experiences they had had with teachers of English at high school. This was shown in responses such as:

English is a good language to learn as it is an international language but at schools our English teachers have lost the patience of attending to students and explain thoroughly [sic] until all the students have understand. English teacher are full of pride that no matter how much effort students can put on the other subject at the end they have to worship them as English it's a passing and failing subject in Swaziland;

At high school level, I remember that the teacher would punish us if we got something wrong;

Our teacher used to treat us so badly. She made us to hate the language as she told us that we were corrupt. She never motivated but instead tempered with our self-esteem;

Like a monster and was boring; / It was very challenging to me, ... the teacher was turning us off.

During high school there were no much instances that happened because even our teachers were not that equipped in English although my colligues [sic] used to mess up in English.

The 28% that strongly felt the need for more focussed English tuition indicated that their requests were not met, as the lecturers instructed them to go and read more and merely gave them dictionaries and more work. While most of their needs were only met through group discussions with other students and reading a lot, students indicated that some lecturers took their time explaining problematic concepts.

How do you maintain or increase your Academic English proficiency?

While some respondents claimed to read novels and practised speaking English, others watched movies and listened to English music to improve and/or maintain their skills in

English. On asked if there were any instances in which they thought in their L1 and translated their thoughts to the L2, students cited numerous cases in which they thought in their L1 and translated their thoughts to English. This happened when they responded to questions not yet having fully grasped a particular concept introduced by the lecturer. This also happened when they interpreted questions, or explained something in detail. This was evidenced in responses such as:

Yes, when I really don't understand the second language, then putting it in my mother language makes it very easy for me to understand what it means.

Asked about instances when they felt ashamed that they could not find the right word to express themselves, respondents cited addressing a gathering of people, during class presentations and when talking to foreigners.

Do you think your knowledge of siSwati has affected or aided your learning of Academic English? How?

All the respondents indicated a strong sense that their L1 had affected the way they used English on a variety of levels. According to their assessment of their communicative abilities in English, some respondents indicated that their L1 had aided them in learning Academic English. Respondents said that:

SiSwati had become a stepping stone. Some words I can be able to write well when I've tried to put them in siSwati;

Because I am able to build on what I know in siSwati, then add on that.

Others, however, indicated that siSwati had inhibited their learning of English in that they tended to think in siSwati even when it was not necessary and then would incorrectly translate those thoughts to English.

From the extended open-ended questionnaire data, one can draw the conclusion that it is evident that for some students, Academic English at tertiary level is not appealing and they feel its content is not significantly different from that of their high school English classes. For others, especially those who are not language majors, Academic English is not significant in any way.

6.4 ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' TEXTS

Through the analysis of students' texts and scripts, I ascertained that learners faced challenges with a number of morpho-syntactic, lexico-semantic and grammatical structures in the English

language. The texts and scripts comprised students' formal writing for college subjects as well as their written responses to interview questions. The latter produced far more idiosyncratic errors than the former, suggesting that students' inability to write clear English is not confined to answering academic questions only. I established the following grammatical and lexicosemantic errors:

ERRORS WITH TENSE AND FORMS OF THE VERB

- Inconsistent use of tense
- Problems with the progressive form of the verb
- Finite verb incorrectly formed

ERRORS WITH AUXILIARY VERBS

- Conflation of **do** with the past tense
- Stressed **do**
- The use of the modal **can** combined with **be able**
- The misuse of the modal **must**

ERRORS WITH PREPOSITIONS AND CONJUNCTIONS

- Misuse of prepositions
- Errors of prepositions with possessives
- Conjunctive balance
- Overuse of the coordinator **and**

ERRORS WITH NOUNS AND PRONOUNS

- Topicalization or resumptive pronouns
- Problems with the use of articles
- Pluralization errors

ERRORS OF REGISTER, STYLE AND SEMANTICS

- Code-switching/Code-mixing
- Direct translations
- Spelling problems
- Literal translations
- Elaborate sentence structure
- Tautology
- Direct translation of idiomatic expressions
- Semantic shift
- Informal register
- Unclear/Ambiguous expressions

ERRORS OF SYNTAX

- Word order permutations
- Problem with reported questions
- Retention of anti-deletions
- Errors with relative clauses
- Dangling / misplaced modifiers
- Non-standard placement of adverbs

6.4.1 ERRORS WITH TENSE AND FORMS OF THE VERB

6.4.1.1 INCONSISTENT USE OF TENSE

I noted in this study that students' writing was flawed by an inconsistent use of verb tenses in particular contexts. For example, students often failed to mark a verb for the past tense or the present tense where this was required. While students had admitted that a major challenge they had in Academic English at high school was the use of tenses (as the response below shows), it was not expected that at college level they would still face the same difficulty.

It was a bit challenging more especially tenses. Most of tense in English add /ed/ at the end of the word e.g. travel to travelled and what was challenging were words like eat, go.

One would assume that students would have mastered tense-marking morphology by the time they enrolled at college, since this aspect of grammar is taught from primary through secondary school level. This research demonstrates, however, that the fluctuation between mainly the present and past tenses in the same sentence structures was problematic.

For the Ngwane Teachers' College students, I was able to collect data from the texts they created in response to a question that asked them to relate a story about their first day at work or at an institution of higher learning. At the South African Nazarene University, respondents in the Faculty of Education were required to recount the funniest incident they could remember in a classroom. For both institutions the past tense was appropriate for their accounts. William Pitcher Teachers' College respondents were to discuss the basic tenets of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, while those of the Swaziland College of Technology were to describe a research methodology. South African Nazarene University respondents in the Faculty of Health had to discuss the five steps of a decision-making process taken by a midwife assigned to a maternity ward which lacked equipment. For the William Pitcher Teachers' College, Swaziland College of Technology and South African Nazarene University, the present tense was appropriate. While all the respondents generally presented their answers in the

appropriate jargon (though the South African Nazarene University in the Faculty of Health respondents presented theirs generally in note form), the following examples in (1)²³ below attest to their typical struggle for the correct fit of tense. Some sentences which started in the present finished in the past and vice versa. I follow each correct English sentence with its correct siSwati translation (followed by a literal back-translation into English) in order to highlight where the error could have occurred as the student used L1 structures and syntax to inform the L2 conversion.

Abbreviations used in parsing and glossing
(Asterisks * are used to indicate ungrammatical structures)

1pp	1 st person plural
1ps	1 st person singular
2pp	2 nd person plural
2ps	2 nd person singular
ABS.PRON	Absolute pronoun
ADJ	Adjective
ADV	Adverb
AGT	Agentive adverb
ANT	Anterior
ASS	Associative adverb
bec.	Become
CONJ	Conjunctive
COP	Copulative
CPL	Completive
DEM	Demonstrative
DISJ	Disjunctive
ENUM	Enumerative
FAR.PST	Far past
FUT	Future
FV	Final vowel

²³ Chapter 6 will start with new numbering of examples.

INS	Instrumental adverb
LOC	Locative
NEG	Negative
NPx	Noun Prefix
OM	Object marker
PART	Participial
PERS	Persistive aspect
POSS	Possessive
POT	Potential
PRES	Present
PST	Past
PST.CONJ	Past conjunctive
PST.DISJ	Past disjunctive
PST.NAR	Past narrative
QNT	Quantitative
REL	Relative
SM	Subject marker
STAB	Stabilizer
SBJV	Subjunctive
VEN	Ventive
:	A morpheme of length
^	Indicates the deletion of an English word
{ }	Represents a morpheme and its allomorphs

(1)

- (a) *As I
- peep**
- through the window I
- saw**
- a cloud and thought it was raining.

Viz: As I peeped through the window, I saw a cloud and thought it was raining.

Ngi-sa-popol-a nge-li-fasitelo ng-a-bon-a

SM1ps-PERS-peep-FV INS-NPx5-window SM1ps-FAR.PST-see-FV

li-fu ng-a-cabang-a kutsi be-li-n-a

NPx5-cloud SM1ps-PST.NAR-think-FV that PST-SM5-rain-FV

Literally: I still peeping through window I saw cloud and I thought that it was raining.

- (b) *She woke me up early so that I
- can**
- get the first bus.

Viz: She woke me up early so that I could get the first bus.

W-a-ngi-vus-a e-ku-s-eni khona

SM1-FAR.PST-OM1ps-wake-FV LOC-NPx15-dawn-LOC so that

ngi-to-khon-a ku-tfol-a iØ-bhasi ye-ku-cala

SM1ps-VEN-be.able-FV INF-get-FV NPx9-bus POSS-NPx15-start

Literally: She long ago me woke in the morning so that I come to be able to get the bus of the start.

- (c) *I used to like idioms so every time when I
- write**
- composition at school I
- love**
- to include them.

Viz: I used to like idioms, so every time that I wrote compositions at school, I **loved to include them.***Ng-a-ngi-ti-tsandz-a t-aga ngako ke so-nkhe*

SM1ps-FAR.PST-SM1ps-OM8-like-FV NPx8-idiom so then QNT7-all

si-khatsi uma ngi-bhal-a in-dzaba e-si-kolw-eni

NPx7-time when SM1ps-write-FV NPx9-story LOC-NPx7-school-LOC

ng-a-ngi-tsandz-a ku-ti-fak-a

SM1ps-FAR.PST-SM1ps-like-FV NPx15-OM8-put.in-FV

Literally: I long ago used to like idioms so that all the time when I write story at school I long ago used to like to them put in.

Huddleston and Pullum (2005, p. 29) define verbs as ‘variable lexemes’ that have a number of inflectional forms called verb paradigms or tense. Each of the tenses are required or permitted in various grammatical contexts and as grammatical expressions of the verb tenses indicate the time of an occurrence. In English, tense distinction is mandatory and is either present, past or future (Crystal, 2010, p. 97).

The central use of the present tense is to indicate present time (i.e. at the moment of speaking (Huddleston & Pullum, 2005, p. 31). To express the present tense, English uses the base form of the verb and it changes in the third person singular where there is the suffix {-s}.

The past tense is normally used to indicate past time (Huddleston & Pullum, 2005; Minow, 2010). The past tense usually adds {-ed} to the base in regular verbs, while

irregular verbs takes other forms. However, the relation between time and tense in English does not always correspond or is not straightforward (Huddleston & Pullum, 2005; Crystal, 2010) as the present tense does not always signal the state of affairs that obtains now, and similarly the past tense does not always indicate past events as shown in the examples in (2) below.

(2)

(a) Lesotho Prime Minister flees (Present tense, past time)

(b) He is surfing tomorrow (present tense, future time)

According to Minow (2010, p. 101), speakers may use the present tense to refer to past time (i.e. historic past). Such use is common in narratives in order to produce a more vivid description, as if the events were being enacted at the time of speech (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan, 1999, p. 454). Similarly, the past tense can be used for a variety of reasons, such as to refer to ‘a present tentative state of mind’ as in example 3 below. This use is referred to as an attitudinal past (Minow, 2010, p. 101).

(3) Did you intend leaving tomorrow?

A simple present tense would have been acceptable, but in order to show politeness, a speaker may choose to use the expression in (3).

Likewise, tense in siSwati indicates whether the action is past, present or future. Like in English, in siSwati time intervals are a continuum and sometimes idiosyncratic (Hlongwane, 1995). Tenses in Bantu languages in general, as observed by Hlongwane, are not bound with a particular time in a fixed way. The present tense may, for example, be used to refer to future time as illustrated in Example (4) below:

(4)

(a) I am leaving next year. (The present tense refers to future time.)

Ngi-hamb-a nge-m-nyaka lo-t-a-ko
SM1ps-leave-FV INS-NPx3-year REL3-come-FV-REL
Literally: I go in year that is coming.

(b) They will arrive now. (The future tense refers to present time.)

Ba-ta.wu-fik-a nyalo
SM2-FUT-arrive-FV now
Literally: They will arrive now.

- (c) Could you help me, please? (This is an instance of the past continuous being used to make a polite request.)

Be-ngi-cel-a lu-sito
 PST-SM1ps-ask.for-FV NPx11-assistance
Literally: I was asking for assistance.

This means that in siSwati it is acceptable and grammatical to use, for instance, the present tense to indicate the future as shown in Example 4 (a) above; to use the future tense to indicate the present time as shown in Example 4 (b) above and to use the past tense to indicate the present time as shown in Example 4 (c) above.

Minow (2010, p. 102) notes that in L2 varieties of English speakers often oscillate between marking the verb for the past tense and leaving it unmarked in another. She attributed this to a number of factors such as:

- (a) The type of verb used on its lexical aspect;
- (b) Whether a verb is regular or irregular;
- (c) The phonetic realization of a verb's past tense form; the phonological environment;
- (d) The frequency of the verb;
- (e) Whether a verb occurs in the foreground or in the background (in a narrative).

It appears that the students' mixture of tenses in their texts as illustrated in (1) above could, on one hand, be attributed to the verbs' occurrence in a narrative.

According to Minow (2010) the Interlanguage Discourse Hypothesis posits that in order to differentiate between the focal point and the background in which events being narrated occurred, speakers switch between tenses. While in L1 speakers the switch is in the foreground, with L2 speakers it is in the background. While this may be true, as example (1) (a) shows, the rest of the examples in (1) above show that the switch occurs both in the foreground and background. As such the vacillation between the present and the past tenses cannot be wholly attributed to the Interlanguage Discourse Hypothesis.

This then means, since the form of tense is not reserved for a particular time in siSwati as the same tense can be used across a range of different times, students' vacillation between tenses can be attributed to this feature of their L1.

- (5) She showed me her photograph, laughing
W-a-ngi-khombis-a si-tfombe sa-khe
 SM1-FAR.PST-OM1ps-show-FV NPx7-photo POSS7-ABS.PRON1
a-hlek-a
 SM1.PART-laugh-FV
Literally: She long ago me showed photograph of hers she laughing.

Thus, in siSwati a combination of the present and past situations is grammatical but when this is transferred to English it results in error. I would argue that their own attestation in the questionnaire data confirms the fact that students cognitively formulate their sentences first in siSwati and then translate them into English. The high incidence of tense mixing and the inconsistency in tense usage is motivated by the prevalence of the present participial in siSwati sentences when referring to past events.

Below is an example of a past tense English sentence in which the second clause is translated by the present participial in siSwati.

(6) *She wrote the exam while she **is** coughing.

Viz.: She wrote the exam while she **was** coughing.

U-bahl-e *lu-hlolo* *a-khwehleh-a*

SM1-write-PST.CONJ NPx11-exam SM1.PART-cough-FV

Literally: She wrote exam she coughing.

Prevost and White (2000) in the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MISH)²⁴ argue that L2 learners represent the correct tense at an abstract level but encounter problems when they have to realize it via surface morphology. Lardiere (2007) argues that past tense marking in English is not a parameterized formal feature, but is rather an amalgamated feature of many functions to one form and it is beyond Universal Grammar. According to her, the omission of the past tense marking by L2 learners does not warrant a conclusion that they have failed to acquire it in English. Their correct use signals their underlying competence and its omission could be a production or performance error.

In the current study, however, I argue that this does not seem to be the case. The fact that students struggle to edit their tenses in their written work appears to suggest that in their teaching of English language grammar (if it is taught) instructors do not teach contrastive grammar in which the linguistics of the L2 is contrasted and compared with that of the L1. Many students attested to the fact that they learnt Academic English through continuous writing of essays and a substantial amount of reading. There was no mention of contrastive grammar

²⁴ The MSIF posits that learners have unconscious knowledge of the functional projections and features underlying tense and agreement but sometimes have problems with the realization of the surface morphology (Prevost & White, 2000, p. 103).

analysis in the approaches used. One student, when asked how s/he learnt Academic English, acknowledged the absence of formal grammar instruction:

Learning Academic English was interesting, but I can't recall the details of how the class was programmed, except that at high school we were no longer examined on grammar because basic understanding was that we all knew it.

Scarcella (2003, p. 15) emphasizes the importance of grammar in Academic English. According to her, in order for learners to function adequately in Academic English they need grammatical competence. The knowledge of grammar in Academic English includes 'the accurate use of frequently occurring morphological and syntactic features as well as the function of these features' (Scarcella, 2003, p14). Among these are the expanded features of the verb system.

According to Krashen's (1987) natural order hypothesis the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable natural order (VanPatten & Benati, 2010, p. 114). For any given language, English in this case, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early while others later. For example, for L1 acquirers of English morphology the progressive marker /-ing/ and the plural marker {-s} are among the first to be acquired yet the third person singular marker {-s} and the possessive {-s} are acquired much later (Krashen, 1987). This order is the same for all people and irrespective of the learner's age, background, and the conditions under which the learner was exposed to the target language. However for L2 acquirers, the order is a little different but there are similarities and the correspondences in patterning in acquisition order can be attributed to the innate programming of learners.

Morpheme studies by Krashen (1987) suggest that the acquisition order for verbal inflections is:

- (a) progressive /-ing/
- (b) regular past tense
- (c) irregular past tense
- (d) third person singular {-s}

This order means that learners first gain accuracy with /-ing/. This is followed by gaining accuracy with the regular past tense and irregular past tense forms, and finally the third person singular. Since, according to Krashen (1987) the acquisition order of regular and irregular past tense forms is not a late acquisition in learning, it appears that the inconsistency in the usage of tense by siSwati L1 speakers could be attributed to their L1.

In L2 learning, however, the development of the accurate use of tenses is a function of building a lexicon, and deficits in building a lexicon would be expected to affect their accurate use of tense (Blom & Paradis 2013, p. 282). While the students' profound difficulties with tense marking inflection on verbs can be traced back to their L1, this study also observes that that wrestling with the correct tense has the potential of deficits in the L2 lexicon.

6.4.1.2 PROBLEMS WITH THE PROGRESSIVE FORM OF THE VERB

Students' writing exhibited problems with the use of the progressive form of the verb. In English, the progressive is formed by means of the auxiliary verb **be** followed by a gerund participle (Huddleston & Pullum, 2005, p. 51), and it denotes that an activity or condition is happening while the words are being uttered (Linnegar, 2009, p.23). This is echoed by Williams (2002, p. 115) who argues that the progressive form is used "where the situation to which it refers is ongoing at the reference time, present or past". This is illustrated in Example (7) below.

(7) I am exploring the world of academia.

In example (7) the writer has, as Williams (2002, p. 115) puts it, "step[ped] into a situation and give[n] the [reader] an account of it as an ongoing, but incomplete situation."

However, as Minow (2010, p. 129) noted not all verbs may occur with the progressive, there being certain constraints on its usage. In Academic English, the progressive form is limited to dynamic verbs and stative verbs do not usually occur in the progressive: "States have duration but are not dynamic" (Minow, 2010, p. 130).

Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008, p. 60) define stativeness as a subclass of non-punctual verbs that involve states rather than action. Crystal (2010, p.107) argues that stative verbs refer only to "processes and states of being in which no obvious action takes place". However, in special contexts, such as idiomatic usage, the progressive use is possible and it gives the verb a 'dynamic sense'.

Verbs such as **know**, **need**, **notice**, **love**, **understand**, **have** and **hear**, to name a few, indicate states of being, and as Van Rooy (2006, p. 44) observes:

States are the least likely to combine with the progressive [as] stative verbs represent situations that are identical from one moment to the next and do not really begin or end like dynamic situations.

While Academic/Standard English does not use BE + /-ing/ with stative verbs (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008, p. 60), students' responses seem to be overriding these distinctions between stative and dynamic verbs.

Research (Arua, 1998; Buthelezi, 1995; De Klerk, 2003b; Gough, 1996; Platt et al., 1984; Van Rooy, 2006; Williams, 1987) indicates that the use of the progressive with stative verbs is not unique to the new varieties of English. Arua (1998, p. 146) who identified this feature in the writings of the students of the University of Swaziland describes it as a 'spoken characteristic of Swazi English'.

The data elicited reveals that students misused the progressive form of the verb and extended it to stative verbs and the examples in (8) below show this usage.

(8) *I code switch when not **knowing** or **having** doubt of proper English.

Viz: I code-switch when I do not know or have doubts about the proper English.

Ngi-shintj-a lu-lwimi uma ngi-ng-at-i

SM1ps-switch-FV NPx11-tongue when SM1ps-NEG.PART-know-NEG

noma ngi-ne-ku-ngabat-a nge-si-Ngisi

or SM1ps-have-NPx15-doubt-FV INS-NPx7-English

lesi-ngi-so

REL7-COP-ABS.PRON7

Literally: I change language when I am not knowing/do not know or if I am having/have doubt about English which is the one.

In siSwati, the progressive form extends to stative verbs as the siSwati translation in (8) above show. This is echoed by Van Rooy (2006, p. 62) who argues that in Bantu languages this aspect is not restricted to either stative or dynamic contexts. The grammar of Bantu languages allows their speakers to emphasize the ongoing quality of a situation whether the situation is dynamic or not and "the progressive construction is mainly used in the persistive sense because inherent duration is a requirement for its use".

As Kachru (1986, pp. 21-22) argues, this innovation appears to occur as a consequence of a "localised function the language is called upon to perform as well as the adaptation of communicative strategies and transfer from the local languages."

In the following example (9), taken from student texts, I suggest how focus on form might have been used to help students anticipate the rules of English grammar when contrasted with that of siSwati grammar.

(9) *Are you a teacher now **knowing** everything?

Viz: Are you a teacher now who knows everything?

Se-wu-ngu-Ø-thishela nyalo w-at-i to-nkhe
 CPL-SM2ps-COP-NPx1a-teacher now SM2ps-know-FV QNT10-all
tin-tfo?

NPx10-thing?

Literally: Now you are teacher, you knowing all things?

In example (9) the siSwati qualifying participial is translated into English by a relative:

knowing → **who knows**.

In this study, I maintain that a focus on form would mean that siSwati students, in learning both the L1 and L2, would be alerted to the occurrence of the progressive form in both written and oral texts.

While this study determines that the students' use of the progressive form with stative verbs is a consequence of L1 influence, another argument is that the extension of the progressive form can be blamed or rather attributed to the emphasis placed on the teaching of the progressive construction in English L2 language classrooms. In English language classrooms in Swaziland, for example, the progressive form is taught mainly in lower secondary school (Form1 or Grade 8). I believe that students learnt through 'schooled drilling' (De Klerk 2003b, p. 235) that /-ing/ patterns with verbs to form the progressive and that the students have thus extended the same rule for all cases of inflection of all verbs.

Of note, however, is while 100% of the students attested to being taught linguistic features in siSwati, when asked how the persistive (traditionally labelled **progressive**) aspect of a verb is formed in siSwati, 97.2% of them failed to produce a plausible rule with regard to this and even failed to provide appropriate examples. Responses such as the following characterized their texts and attest to this failure:

We use morphemes;
 We use prefixes;
 I don't know, it's a long time since I learnt it;
 We raise the voice.

Those that managed to give accurate responses such as the one below seemed to have first researched them rather than being able to offer them instantly from their knowledge of the L1.

In forming the progressive aspect of a verb in siSwati we use the morpheme /sa-/ of the progressive implication by infixing it between the subjectival concord and the radical. For example: *Ba-sa-dlal-a* 'They are still playing'.

In the context of the present study the majority of the respondents' inability to provide correct responses seems to indicate that tertiary students have little or no knowledge of the rules of grammar of their L1 and this appears to hamper their ability to remember and make meaningful the grammar of their L2. The fact that students were unable to formulate the rules of their L1 can in part explain the findings which suggest, in part, that there has been an absence of the focus on form in their L1 and L2 classes.

6.4.1.2 FINITE VERB INCORRECTLY FORMED

Although fairly rare, some students' writings exhibited the past tense and the third person singular of some verbs incorrectly formed. For instance the verb **tear** had a wrong ending of the past tense form {-ed}, the verb **stick** had a double past tense, and the past tense form of the verb *learn* had added the third person singular form as shown in the examples in (10) below:

(10)

- (a) *I was caned when I paged them through as I **teared** them.

Viz: I was caned when I paged through them as I tore them.

Ng-a-ngi-shay-w-a

uma ngi-ti-vul-a

SM1ps-FAR.PST-SM1ps-beat-PASS-FV *when* SM1ps-OM10-open-FV

ngoba ng-a-ngi-ti-dzabul-a

because SM1ps-FAR.PST-SM1ps-OM10-tear-FV

Literally: I long ago used to be caned when I them open because I long ago was them tearing.

- (b) *I **learnts** siSwati as my mother tongue.

Viz: I learnt siSwati as my mother tongue.

Ng-a-fundz-a

si-Swati

njenge-lu-lwimi

SM1ps-FAR.PST-learn-PST NPx7-siSwati like-NPx11-tongue

lwa-Ø-make

POSS11-NPx1a-mother

Literally: I learnt siSwati as language of mother.

(c) *When speaking English you find yourself **stucked**.

Viz: When one speaks English one finds oneself stuck.

Uma u-khulum-a si-Ngisi u-ti-khandz-a

When SM1ps-speak-FV NPx7-English SM1-REFL-find-FV

u-khiyek-a

SM1-get.locked-FV

Literally: When you speaking English you yourself find you get locked.

In English the past tense form of the verb **tear** is **tore**, for **learn** it is **learnt** and for **stick** it is **stuck**. The past tense form of any verb cannot affix the inflectional morpheme {-s} to indicate the third person singular as in (10) (b). It can also not add the inflectional morpheme {-ed} to the verb root **tear** and **stuck** to indicate past time as these are irregular verbs. The structures in which these forms occur are ungrammatical in both the L1 and the L2. These errors are intra-lingual and seem to be generalizations of the English rules relating to inflection of irregular verbs for the past tense and the concord of subjects and verbs in the past tense. To inflect regular verbs for the past tense in English, one should add {-ed} to the base form of the verb as in **climb** > **climb-ed**; **jump** > **jump-ed**, but with irregular verbs the change is internal as with **tear** > **tore**; **stick** > **stuck**. To show the third person singular in the present tense, one adds {-s} to the base form of the verb and a verb in the past tense is not inflected for the third person singular.

6.4.2 ERRORS WITH AUXILIARY VERBS

6.4.2.1 CONFLATIONS OF **DO** WITH THE PAST TENSE

The conflation of the verb **do** with the past tense form of the main verb was another error identified in students' written texts. The verb **do** was attached to a lexical verb and both appeared in their past forms; a syntactic option that is not grammatical in Academic English. Arua (1998) identified this feature in the spoken form of Swazi English, De Klerk (2003b) observed it in Xhosa English and Mesthrie (2006) in BSAE. According to Arua (1998, p. 145), when the verb 'do' co-occurs with another one in Standard English it shows emphasis. "Its function is to remove doubt as to whether an action was performed or not".

In Xhosa English De Klerk (2003b), observed that **did** was not only combined with a verb in the present but also with a verb already marked for the past tense. This combination resulted to a double past. It appears that this feature is not unique to Black South African English.

Mesthrie & Bhatt (2008, p. 70) point out that the use of **do** together with a lexical verb is an "alternative periphrastic way of marking tense in indicative clauses." However, with reference

to the unstressed **do** in South African Black English (SAfBE), Mesthrie (1999) points out that it is used today with a pragmatic effect marking a verb as conspicuous.

In the writings of students, it appears that both **do** and the lexical verb with which it co-occurs are used not only to show emphasis, but also to mark the past tense. The following exemplify this structure.

(11)

- (a) *They **did taught** me siSwati grammar.

Viz: They **taught** me siSwati grammar or They **did teach** me siSwati grammar.

B-a-ngi-fundzis-a lu-lwimi lwe-si-Swati
SM2-FAR.PST-OM1ps-teach-FV NPx11-grammar POSS11-NPx7-siSwati
Literally: They long ago me taught language of siSwati.

- (b) *He **didn't uttered** even a single word to us.

Viz: He didn't utter even a single word to us.

A-ka-khulum-anga noma li-nye li-vi
NEG-SM1.NEG-speak-PST.NEG even ENUM5-one NPx5-word
ki-tsi
LOC-ABS.PRON1pp
Literally: He did not speak even one word to us.

- (c) *I was raised by my grandmother who did not **went** to school.

Viz: I was raised by my grandmother who did not go to school

Ng-a-khulis-w-a ngu-Ø-gogo
SM1ps-FAR.PST-raise-PASS-FV AGT-NPx1a-grandmother
wa-mi lo-nga-y-anga e-si-kolw-eni
POSS1-ABS.PRON1ps REL1-NEG-go.to-PST.NEG LOC-NPx7-school-LOC
Literally: I was brought up by grandmother of mine who did not go to school.

While in the example (11) (a) **do** appears to have been used to show emphasis, in (b) and (c) it appears to have been generally used in the place of the simple past tense.

In siSwati there are two forms of the past tense: the recent and the remote past tense. The recent past has the conjunctive, disjunctive and the continuous forms. The remote past has the disjunctive and conjunctive forms. Both the conjunctive and disjunctive forms of the recent past are formed from the base form of the verb by removing the final /-a/ vowel and replacing it by the formative marker /-e/ for the conjunctive form and /-ile/ for the disjunctive form. The continuous form is formed by the past formative /-be/ affixed after the subject concord. The remote past is formed by a remote past tense concord which is derived from the subject concord plus past tense formative /-a/ as in the examples in (12) below:

(12)

(a) Present tense

Ø-Sihle u-bhal-a in-cwadzi
 NPx1a-Sihle SM1-write-FV NPx9-letter
Literally: Sihle s/he writes a letter.

(b) Recent past conjunctive

Ø-Sihle u-bhal-e in-cwadzi
 NPx1a-Sihle SM1-write-PST.CONJ NPx9-letter
Literally: Sihle s/he wrote a letter.

(c) Recent past disjunctive

Ø-Sihle u-yi-bhal-ile in-cwadzi
 NPx1a-Sihle SM1-OM9-write-PST.DISJ NPx9-letter
Literally: Sihle s/he it wrote a letter.

(d) Recent past continuous

Ø-Sihle a-be-bhal-a in-cwadzi
 NPx1a-Sihle SM1-PST-write-FV NPx9-letter
Literally: Sihle s/he was writing a letter.

(e) Remote past conjunctive

Ø-Sihle w-a-bhal-a in-cwadzi
 NPx1a-Sihle SM1-FAR.PST-write-FV NPx9-letter
Literally: Sihle long ago s/he wrote a letter.

(f) Remote past disjunctive

Ø-Sihle w-a-yi-bhal-a in-cwadzi.
 NPx1a-Sihle SM1-FAR.PST-OM9-write-FV NPx9-letter
Literally: Sihle long ago s/he it wrote a letter.

(g) Remote past continuous

Ø-Sihle a-be-yi-bhal-a in-cwadzi.
 NPx1a-Sihle SM1.PART-PST-OM9-write-FV NPx9-letter
Literally: Sihle long ago s/he was it writing a letter.

From the examples given in (12) above we notice that there is no equivalent of the verb {do} in siSwati. It appears that the use of **did** in the students' writing before the past tense form of the main verb could be attributed to the fact that to them, both **did** and the main verb appear to be tense carriers; hence the necessity to mark tense on both. Further, it seems as if they see **did** as a useful way of emphatically marking the past tense

particularly since **did** is used often in past tense questions in English as the example below shows:

(13) Question: Did you hear him say that?

Answer: Yes, I did.

6.4.2.2 STRESSED DO

In this study I also noted that students generally used the stressed verb {do} as an auxiliary verb. The following examples illustrate this usage.

(14)

(a) *Yes, my teacher **did** beat me.

Viz: Yes, my teacher used to beat me.

Yebo Ø-thishela wa-mi w-a-ngi-shay-a.

Yes NPx1a-teacher POSS1-ABS.PRON1ps SM1-FAR.PST-OM1ps-beat-FV

Literally: Yes, teacher of mine she long ago me beat.

(b) *The teachers who were teaching us **did** practice it for years.

Viz: The teachers who taught us had been practising it for years.

Bo-thishela la-be-ba-si-fundzis-a

NPx2b-teacher REL2-PST-SM2-OM1pp-teach-FV

b-a-ti-lungiselel-a ko-na imi-nyaka

SM2-REFL-practise-FV ABS.PRON17-STAB NPx4-year

Literally: Teachers who were us teaching they long ago themselves prepared for it years.

(c) *Yes, it **do** happen.

Viz: Yes, it does happen.

Yebo ku-y-entek-a

Yes SM17-PRS.DISJ-happen-FV

Literally: Yes, it does happen

The co-occurrence of **do** with another verb seemed to be a way of showing emphasis and it could be traced to the students' L1 manner of emphasizing a point in which the adverbial formative *vele* 'indeed' is used. In siSwati as in English auxiliary verbs are used in conjunction with lexical verbs. However, in siSwati, auxiliaries are used with lexical verbs that are in different forms such as the infinitive, the participial, the subjunctive and other moods (Sibanda & Mthembu, 1996; Ziervogel, 1952; Ziervogel & Mabuza, 1976). It appears that in their writing students use the 'auxiliary' do for a pragmatic effect: to mark the lexical verb as salient.

Furthermore, in siSwati emphasis by way of object concords and the disjunctive form of the verb is normal, and it would appear that in the absence of this linguistic feature in English, students still want to emphasize the action of the verb as the examples below show:

(15)

- (a) *Ngi-ya-tsandz-a ku-lalel-a um-culo.*
 SM1ps-PRS.DISJ-like-FV INF-listen-FV NPx3-music
I do like listening to music.

It is also possible to say:

- (b) *Ngi-tsandz-a ku-lalel-a um-culo.*
 SM1ps-like-FV NPx-listen-FV NPx3-music
I like listening to music.

In example (15) (a) the action of the verb has been emphasized by the inclusion of the present conjunctive prefix /-ya-/, but in example (15) (b) there is no emphasis on the action of the verb. It would appear that the siSwati-speaker translates this disjunctive form emphasis by the English auxiliary {do}. This also happens with the disjunctive form of the past tense.

- (16) *U-wa-hlukuhl-ile yini ema-tinyo a-kho?*
 SM2ps-OM6-brush-PAST.DISJ or.not NPx6-teeth POSS6-ABS.PRON2ps
Did you brush your teeth or not?
Literally: You them did brush or not teeth of yours?

In the above sentence emphasis is obtained via the disjunctive form of the perfect tense /-ile/ and the inclusion of the object marker /-wa-/ for *ematinyo* ‘teeth’.

I would argue that without these morphemes at their disposal, the siSwati-speaker when speaking English uses the auxiliary {do} to fulfil the same function of emphasis.

Another reason for the incorrect use of **did** in Academic English could be attributed to the non-mastery of the rule that modal and auxiliary verbs, including {do}, cannot be followed by a lexical verb in the past tense.

6.4.2.3 THE USE OF THE MODAL ‘CAN’ COMBINED WITH ‘BE ABLE’

Sentence structures with the modal **can** combined with **be able** also featured in students’ writing. Arua (2004), Buthelezi (1995), De Klerk (2003b), Gough (1996), and Mesthrie (2004) identified this feature in the New Englishes. In their analysis of BSAE, Buthelezi (1995), Gough (1996) and Mesthrie (2006) observed that black speakers of English used **can be able** in contexts where Standard English would normally use **could** or **would**. The same observation was made by Arua (2004) for Botswana English, and De Klerk (2003b) for Xhosa English.

In English **can** denotes the ability or the power or the capacity to do something, and it may also indicate the possibility of an action occurring. In Academic English it is tautological and

ungrammatical to use **can** alongside **be able**. The sentences below illustrate its use in the students' writing and how they are transferring L1 usage into the L2:

(17)

- (a) *She told me she **could be able to** make me rich.

Viz: She told me she could make me rich.

W-a-ngi-tjel-a *kutsi*

SM1-FAR.PST-OM1ps-tell-PST.CONJ that

a-be-nga-khon-a *ku-ng-ent-a* *ngi-njing-e*

SM1-PST-POT-*be.able*-FV INF-OM1ps-*make*-FV SM1ps-*bec.rich*-SBJV

Literally: She long ago me told that she could be able to me make I should become rich.

- (b) *That was enough to make her to conclude I **can be able to** teach.

Viz: That was enough to make her conclude that I **could** teach.

Loko *be-kw-enel-e* *ku-m-ent-a*

3DEM2 PST-SM17-*bec.enough*-ANT INF-OM1-*make*-FV

a-song-e *kutsi* *ngi-nga-khon-a*

SM1.SBJV-*conclude*-SBJV that SM1ps-POT-*be.able*-FV

ku-fundzis-a

INF-teach-FV

Literally: That was enough to her make that she conclude that I can be able to teach.

- (c) * I **can be able to** climb a mountain.

Viz: I can climb a mountain.

Ng-nga-khon-a *kw-ekhwel-a* *in-tsaba*

SM1ps-POT-*can.be.able*-FV INF-*climb*-FV NPx9-*mountain*

Literally: I can be able to climb mountain.

In the examples above, it appears that **can be able** bears both the meaning of possibility (17) (a) and ability (17) (b) and (c). In BSAE, Mesthrie (2006) believes that it bears the latter.

6.4.2.4 THE USE OF THE MODAL AUXILIARY 'MUST'

The misuse of **must** was identified by Arua (1998), who noted that it occurs more frequently than other auxiliaries in Swazi English. He identified this misuse not only among the students of the University of Swaziland but also in an official document "on the implementation of an Academic Communication Skills Unit/Centre at the University of Swaziland, prepared by a local academic" (Arua, 1998, p. 142).

In this study, I also identified the misuse of **must** in both the students' and lecturers' respondents. According to Arua (1998, p. 141), **must** in Standard English refers to compulsion or necessity, such that when one says:

(18) You **must** do it

one implies that whoever is addressed is not given an option: **must** indicates that it is a directive. However, as the sentences in (19) illustrate, respondents used this modality as a synonym for **should**, **had to** and **ought**.

(19)

- (a) *By the time they leave the institution, they **must** have proficiency generally expected from a college graduate.

Viz: By the time they leave the institution, they **should have** the proficiency generally expected from a college graduate.

Nge-si-khatsi ba-hamb-a e-kolishi, ku-fanel-e
 INST-NPx7-time SM2-leave-FV LOC-college SM17-bec.fitting-ANT
ba-b-e ne-lwati lolu-bhekek-ile
 SM2-become-SBJV ASS-NPx11-knowledge REL11-bec.expected-ANT
ku-m-photfuli wa-se-kolishi
 LOC-NPx1-graduate POSS1-LOC-college

Literally: By time they leave college, it is fitting they should have knowledge which is expected from graduate of at college.

- (b) *They had to call Dean of student affairs, so I **must** just wait for him.

Viz: They had to call the Dean of Students Affairs, so I **had** to wait for him.

Be-ku-mel-e ba-bit-e um-condzisi we-tin-dzaba
 PST-SM2-have.to-ANT SM2-call-SBJV NPx1-dean POSS1-NPx10-affair
te-ba-fundzi ngako a-ngi-m-e nje
 POSS10-NPx2-student so HORT.SM1ps-wait-SBJV just
ngi-m-mel-e
 SM1ps-OM1-wait.for-SBJV

Literally: It was necessary they should call Dean of Affairs of Students so let me wait just I should her await.

In siSwati **must** is translated by the auxiliaries *kumele* or *kufanele* and can be followed by the verb in the infinitive or the subjunctive. The subjunctive can be used in siSwati to indicate politeness, and in such cases the meaning of the auxiliaries in English is closer to **should** or **ought to**. The students appear unable to make this distinction and translate the subjunctive construction with **must** which is more peremptory than their intention.

6.4.3 ERRORS WITH PREPOSITIONS AND CONJUNCTIONS

6.4.3.1 MISUSE OF PREPOSITIONS

Of note in the students' work was the challenge they faced in using prepositions. While some were inappropriately used, others were left out where they were expected and some were redundant. The general trend seemed to be more of presumption than mastery of the subject

ADJ6-*some* NPx6-*word* SM6-*easy* INF-OM6-*speak-FV*
nge-si-Ngisi kuna-nge-si-Swati
 INS-NPx7-*English more.than*-INS-NPx7-*siSwati*
Literally: Some words they easy to speak them in English more than in siSwati.

(ii) *We are not allowed to talk to her **with** English.

Viz: We are not allowed to talk to her **in** English.

A-si-ka-vumelek-i ku-khulum-a ku-ye
 NEG-SM1pp-NEG.PAST-*bec.allowed*-NEG INF-*talk-FV* LOC-ABS.PRON1
nge-si-Ngisi
 INS-NPx7-*English*
Literally: We are not allowed to talk to her by/through/in/about/... English.

(d) *Its because I am used **in** both languages, and the fact that some words are easy to speak **by** English than in siSwati.

Viz: It is because I am used **to** both languages, and the fact that some words are easier to speak **in** English than they are in siSwati.

Ku-ngoba ng-ejwayel-e to-tim-bili
 SM17-*because* SM1P-*bec.used.to*-ANT QNT10-ADJ10-*two*
tiØ-lwimi futsi si-zathu kutsi lama-nye ema-gama a-lula
 NPx10-*language and* COP.NPx7-*reason that* ADJ6-*some* NPx6-*word* SM6-
easy
ku-wa-khulum-a nge-si-Ngisi.
 INF-OM6-*speak-FV* INS-NPx7-*English.*
Literally: It because I long ago was used to both languages and it is reason that
some words they easy to them speak in English.

There are a number of issues relating to the difference between English and siSwati prepositions:

- a) English prepositions, and perhaps more particularly locative ones, do not always have an obvious logic to them. For example: ‘I found her **in** school’ vs ‘I found her **at** school’. ‘*She was **in** university.’ ‘She was **at** university.’ ‘They were **in** gaol’. ‘*They were **at** gaol’. ‘They were **at the** gaol’. There are also the subtleties of meaning resulting from prepositional changes in ‘**in** court’ and ‘**at** court’. So when translating a siSwati locative into English, there is a confusing array of possible prepositions available.
- b) SiSwati has a number of verbs of which the English translation requires, or may require, a preposition: *-phuma* ‘come out, come from’; *-vela* ‘come from’; *-baleka* ‘flee (from)’. In translating such verbs, siSwati-speakers may omit the preposition in English, leading to ungrammatical sentences (cf. Example 20).
- c) In English, there are verbs which cannot be used with prepositions: ***cope up**; ***board on a bus** (ct. **alight from the bus**) and also verbs which occur with specific prepositions

or adverbs, where there is a fairly literal interpretation of the preposition or adverb: **hang up** (eg. the washing), **put down** (eg. the pen), **get out of** (eg. my kitchen).

- d) There are phrasal verbs in which the preposition/adverb is not to be taken literally: **cut up** the meat, **slow down** (this can be **slow up** in the US). The verbs **put** and **get** are infamous in English with all the varied combinations: ‘**He puts in** a long day at office.’ ‘The news **put me out**.’ ‘His attitude puts me off.’ ‘He doesn’t **get along** with me.’ ‘**Get with** the programme.’ ‘He **got into** the topic.’ These phrasal verbs have to be learnt as discrete lexical items.
- e) As has already been mentioned, the siSwati adverbial prefixes {*nga-*} and to a lesser extent, {*na-*} can have a multiplicity of translations in English: Thus, {*nga-*} may be translated into English by ‘with’, ‘through’, ‘by’, ‘in’, ‘at’, ‘on’, ..., while {*na-*} may be translated as ‘with’, ‘also’, ‘and’, ‘too’. SiSwati-speakers have to know which of the English translations are appropriate in a particular context.

6.4.3.2 ERRORS OF PREPOSITIONS WITH POSSESSIVES

Possession in respondents’ texts was marked by the prepositions **for** and **of**. In English, nouns in the genitive case are marked by the genitive suffix {-s} but note the alternative English structure: possessee of possessor. E.g. ‘The defeat of the invading armies’, ‘The patina of the sculpture.’ According to Crystal (2004, p. 200) the genitive identifies the definite reference of the head noun in the noun phrase.

In siSwati, possession is marked by placing the possessed noun phrase before the noun phrase denoting the possessor. In between the two nouns, one affixes the possessive concord of the possessed noun. This concord is represented by ‘of’ or ‘for’ as shown in example (21) below.

- (21) *In-dlu ya-Ø-make i-sh-ile.*
 NPx9-house POSS9-NPx1a-mother NPx9-burn-PST
 Literally: House of mother it has burnt.

6.4.3.3 CONJUNCTIVE BALANCE

Students writing exhibited the **although** ... **but** construction in complex sentences. This construction was also found in BSAE by Gough (1996). In siSwati, *noma* ‘although’, or *nobe* ‘even though’, and *kodvwa* and *kepha*, both meaning ‘but’, can occur in the same sentence in

any order and yield grammatical sentences. Problems may occur when these sentences are directly translated into English, as shown in example (22) below:

(22)

*But even though he is sick, **but** he goes to work.

Kodvwa nobe a-gul-a kepha u-ya-y-a
But even.though SM1.PART-be.sick-FV, but SM1-PRS.DISJ-go.to-FV
e-m-sebent-ini
 LOC-NPx3-work-LOC
Literally: But even though she is sick but she does go to work.

Respondents' use of both **although/even though** and **but** in one sentence, as shown in example (23) below, can be traced back to their L1:

(23)

(a) ***Although** he did not pay for me, **but** I was able to study.

Viz: Although he did not pay for me, I was able to study.

Noma a-nga-ngi-bhadalel-anga mi-ne
 Although SM1.PART-NEG-OM1ps-pay.for-PST.NEG ABS.PRON1ps-STAB
kepha ngi-khon-ile ku-fundz-a.
but SM1ps-bec.able-ANT INF-study-FV
Literally: Although she did not for me pay me but I was able to study.

(b) ***Even though** I do not know some difficult words **but** my instincts guide me to the correct answers.

Viz: Even though I do not know some words that are difficult, my instincts guide me to the correct answers.

Noma ngi-nga-w-at-i lama-nye ema-gama
 Even.if SM1ps-NEG.PART-OM6-know-FV ADJ-some NPx6-word
la-lukhuni kepha imi-va ya-mi
 REL6-difficult but NPx4-instinct POSS4-ABS.PRON1sg
i-ya-ngi-condzis-a mi-ne
 SM4-PRS.DISJ-OM1ps-guide-FV ABS.PRON1ps-STAB
e-tim-phendvulw-eni leti-ngi-to
 LOC-NPx10-answer-LOC REL10-COP-PRON10
Literally: Even though I not them know some words which difficult but instincts my they me guide me to answers which are them.

6.4.3.4 OVERUSE OF THE COORDINATOR 'AND'

Of note are the multiple uses of the coordinator 'and' in one sentence in students' texts. In Academic English 'and' mainly coordinates two clauses, phrases, and parts of a noun phrase (Greenbaum, 1991, p. 45) all of which are of equal importance and grammatically alike (Crystal, 2004, p. 310). In students' writings the norm was to repeat the conjunction to join

more than two clauses or to use the co-ordinator in an inappropriate context, as shown in the examples below.

(24)

- (a) *... the Dean arrived **and** he greeted me, then asked for my acceptance letter and where I **come** from.

Viz: ... the Dean of Students arrived, greeted me then asked for my acceptance letter and where I came from.

um-condzisi we-ba-fundzi w-:-efik-a
 NPx1-dean POSS1-NPx2-student SM1-FAR.PST-arrive-FV
w-a-ngi-bingelel-a w-a-cel-a
 SM1-PST.NAR-OM1ps-greet-FV SM1-PAST.NAR-ask.for-FV
in-cwadzi ye-kw-emukel-w-a kwa-mi
 NPx9-letter POSS9-NPx15-accept-PASS-FV POSS15-ABS.PRON1ps
ne-kutsi ngi-chamuk-a kuphi.
 ASS-that SM1ps-appear.from-FV *where*
Literally: Dean of Students s/he long ago arrived and s/he greeted me and s/he asked for letter of being accepted of mine and that I appear from where.

- (b) *I could not believe it **and** that I was going to be a teacher **and** be able to take care of myself **and** my sister.

Viz: I did not believe that I was going to be a teacher and be able to take care of myself and my sister

A-ngi-ku-kholw-anga kutsi ngi-ta.wu-b-a
 NEG-SM1ps-OM17-believe-NEG *that* SM1ps-FUT-become-FV
ngu-Ø-thishela ngi-khon-SBJV ku-ti-nakekel-a
 COP-NPx1a-teacher SM1ps-be able-FV INF-REFL-care.for-FV
kanye na-Ø-dzadze w-etfu²⁵
together ASS-NPx1a-sister POSS1-ABS.PRON1pp
Literally: Not I it believed that I shall become it is a teacher and I shall be able to myself care for and sister of ours.

²⁵ Historically this derives from *wa- + -itfu*, with *a + i > e*.

6.4.4 ERRORS WITH NOUNS AND PRONOUNS

6.4.4.1 TOPICALIZATION OR RESUMPTIVE PRONOUNS

According to Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008, p. 81), the phenomenon of topicalization is a common feature in informal Standard English and the New Englishes. This is echoed by Minow (2010, p. 67) who notes that “the use of resumptive pronouns in relative clauses has been identified in a number of Englishes around the world.” This means that resumptive pronouns are not a unique feature in the new Englishes. I would argue that in siSwati resumptive pronouns can also be used for topicalization, as in Example (25):

- (25) *Leyo-n-tfombatana, a-si-yi-nak-anga*
 2DEM9-NPx9-little.girl NEG-SM1pp-OM9-notice-PST.NEG
That little girl, we didn't notice her
Literally: That little girl not we her didn't notice.

However, Minow believes that the term ‘resumptive pronoun’ is sometimes misleading as it is made to refer to both the resumptive pronouns and copied pronouns. According to Williams (1987), resumptive pronouns are inserted in relative clauses and pronoun copies occur immediately after the noun phrase. While Mesthrie (1997) and Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008) divide the phenomena of resumptive pronoun/topicalization into focusing, fronting and left dislocation, it appears that they and Gough (1996) use the two phenomena synonymously as the following examples in (26) show.

(26)

- (a) *The people, *they* have got nothing to eat (Mesthrie, 1997, p. 132)
 (b) *The man who I saw *him* was wearing a big hat (Gough, 1996, p. 61)
 (c) *The people who are essentially born in Soweto, *they* speak Tsotsi (Mesthrie, 1997, p. 132)

In (26) (a) above the pronoun **they** occurs after the noun phrase **the people** it refers to, and in (b) and (c) the pronouns **him** and **they** occur in relative clauses and they still refer to the subject noun phrases. In all three instances, Gough (1996), Mesthrie (1997), and Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008) refer to such pronouns as ‘resumptive pronouns’.

Adopting Williams’ (1987) approach of the distinction she makes between resumptive and copied pronouns, I found that Swazi students’ Academic English writing evidenced traces of both.

The resumptive pronoun/topicalization was in the form of left dislocation. In left dislocation the noun phrase appears in the initial “pre-clausal position” and has a “co-reference with a personal pronoun that occurs in the same clause” (Minow, 2010, p. 172). According to her it occurs in both declarative and interrogative clauses as the examples below show.

(27)

(a) *Me and Sarah Jones we went up. (Minow, 2010, p. 173)

(b) *That picture of the frog, where is it? (Minow, 2010, p. 173 citing Biber et al. 1999, p. 957)

In (27) (a) the pronoun **we** is used to signal to the hearer the exact meaning of the referent and in (27) (b) the speaker establishes what the s/he is looking for and emphasizes it by the pronoun **it**. The sentence in 27 (b) is acceptable in conversational English but might give rise to problems in written Academic English, producing inelegant sentences like: ‘Those issues of the subjunctive, we must understand them.’

According to Mesthrie (1997, p. 131), and Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008, p. 81), one of the functions of left dislocation (double subject) is to prepose a topic and then supply a comment by way of a full sentence. Pragmatically, they say it reintroduces information that has not been the subject of talk for a while as well as to show the difference between noun phrases.

Further, students erroneously copied pronouns and this happened predominantly in main clauses, and in apposition with the noun phrases they referred, to as is evident in Example (28) below:

(28)

(a) *The teachers, **they** are not good in English and this demotivates the students.

Viz: The teachers are not good in English and this does not motivate students.

Bo-thishela a-ba-si-ko kahle

NPx2b-teacher NEG-SM2-NEG.COP-ABS.PRON17 well

e-si-Ngis-ini futsi loku a-ku-ba-khutsat-i

LOC-NPx7-English-LOC and 1DEM17 NEG-SM17-OM2-motivate-NEG

ba-fundzi

NPx2-student

Literally: Teachers they are not it well in English and this not it them motivates students.

- (b) *A siSwati fruit *litfundvuluka* **it** has got no English name in Swaziland.
 Viz: A fruit in the siSwati language – *litfundvuluka* – has no English name in Swaziland.

Si-tselo se-si-Swati li-tfundvuluka si-te li-gama
 NPx7-fruit POSS7-NPx7-siSwati NPx5-litfundvuluka SM7-not. have NPx5-name
le-si-Ngisi e-Swat-ini
 POSS5-NPx7-English LOC-Swaziland-LOC
Literally: Fruit of Swazi litfundvuluka it not have name of English in Swaziland.

- (c) *I and my friends **we** realized that the lunch hour was over.
 Viz: My friends and I realized that the lunch hour was over.

Mi-ne ne-ba-ngani ba-mi
 PRON1ps-STAB ASS-NPx2-friend POSS2-PRON1ps-me
s-a-bon-a kutsi s-e-l-engc-ile
 SM1pp-FAR.PST-see-FV *that* CPL-PST-OM5-pass-PST.CONJ
li-hora le-li-dina
 NPx5-hour POSS5-NPx5-lunch
Literally: I and friends of mine we long ago saw that already it has passed hour of lunch.

Resumptive objectival pronouns though not frequently, also appeared in students' texts. They seemed to appear after an infinitive verb as shown below:

(29)

*I was given a book called Lifa *where we used to study it*.

Viz: I was given a book, Lifa that we used to study.

Ng-a-nik-w-a in-cwadzi nge-ku-ts-i Lifa
 SM1ps-FAR.PST-give-PASS-FV NPx9-book INS-INT-say-FV Lifa
le-be-si-vam-e ku-yi-fundz-a
 REL9-PST-SM1pp-bec.used.to-PST.CONJ INF-OM9-read-FV
Literally: I long ago was given book by to say Lifa which we used to it read.

A similar trend was observed by Scott and Tucker (1974) among Arabic-speaking students learning English as an L2. Among Arabic-speaking learners of English, the repetition of the object after the infinitive was attributable to non-acquisition of the English L2 rule that requires that the object of a subordinate construction reduced to a sentential complement be deleted when it is the same as the object of the main clause (Scott & Tucker, 1974, p. 90).

In siSwati, subject and object noun phrases require that when a verb has a subject or an object, a pronominal prefix agreeing with the subject or object in terms of noun class is attached to the verb. Therefore, failure to delete the copied and resumptive pronouns is duly attributable to this feature of the language.

SiSwati requires that a subject (topic) links with the verb by means of a concord. The concord corresponds to a subject pronoun in English and refers back to the subject. Therefore the necessity to represent the subject by way of a subject concord in the verb in siSwati is clearly transferred into students' attempts at writing English sentences. For instance the pronoun **they** in (27) (a) compensated for the pronoun /*ba-*/, and **it** in (28) compensated for /*li*/ in the siSwati version. Resumptive pronouns and copied pronouns can thus be traced to cross-linguistic influence. It seemed to be related to the syntax of the students' L1 where a pronoun apposition is used in the place of a noun that appears initially in a sentence.

6.4.4.2 PROBLEMS WITH THE USE OF ARTICLES

Articles fall under the category of determiners and they specify the reference of a noun. In English they are subdivided into three categories, the definite article **the**, the indefinite articles **a** and **an** and the zero article (\emptyset^1) and the null article (\emptyset^2) (see below).

In English, the indefinite article expresses a general state of affairs and also accompanies what is not known (Crystal, 2004), and the definite article expresses definiteness and is used to refer to an immediate situation, and may have an anaphoric or cataphoric reference (Crystal, 2004, p.139). The zero article is used in idiomatic usage and when one talks about means of transport, routines and human institutions (Crystal, 2004, p.139). According to Chesterman, 1993, pp. 15-17; and Master, 1997 (both cited in Minow, 2010, p. 156) the **zero** article, \emptyset^1 , may precede uncountable nouns and plural countable nouns which refer to an indefinite number or amount, and the null article, \emptyset^2 , occurs before countable singular common nouns and before proper nouns. The examples below illustrate these uses.

(30)

- (a) Why did he get on *an* elevator? (Altenberg and Vago (2010, p. 21)
- (b) Sometimes *a* verb changes its form. (Altenberg and Vago (2010, p. 25)
- (c) *The* lights of the city twinkled. (Altenberg and Vago (2010, p. 22)
- (d) I love eating \emptyset^1 rice. (Altenberg and Vago, 2010, p. 22)
- (e) \emptyset^2 Zizipho might be the next president of the Students' Representative Council. (My own example)

In this study, I observed that students' writing exhibited difficulties with English articles. This was evident in the inclusion of these articles in contexts where they were not expected, their absence where they were needed, and the confusion between the uses of the various articles.

Students' erroneous usage of the articles is shown in example (31) below. While the indefinite article 'a' was used with non-count nouns as in example (31) (a), in other instances articles were totally left out as in (31) (b) and (c).

(31)

- (a)** *The learning of parts of speech and tenses was **a** total confusion.

Viz: The learning of parts of speech and tenses was total confusion.

Ku-fundv-w-a kwe-ti-tfo te-n-khulumo
 NPx15-learn-PASS-FV POSS15-NPx8-part POSS8-NPx9-speech
ne-ti-khatsi be-ku-ngu-m-sangano we-ku-gcin-a
 ASS-NPx8-time PST-NPx15-COP-NPx3-confusion POSS3-NPx15-be.final-FV
Literally: Being learnt of parts of speech and times it was confusion of to be final.

- (b)** *... they had to call ^ Dean of student affairs.

Viz: ... they had to call the Dean of Students' affairs.

Kw-a-mel-a ba-bit-e um-condzisi
 SM17-FAR.PST-have.to-APPL-FV SM2-call-SBJV NPx1-Dean
we-tin-dzaba te-ba-fundzi
 POSS1-NPx10-affair POSS10-NPx2-student
Literally: It long ago was necessary they should call Dean of Affairs of Students.

- (c)** *I was too excited at the same time ^ little nervous.

Viz: I was very excited and a little nervous at the same time.

Ng-a-ngi-jabul-e kakhulu nge-si-khatsi si-nye
 SM1ps-bec.excited-ANT very INS-NPx7-time ENUM7-one
ngi-ne-luvalo kancane
 SM1ps-have-NPx11-nervousness a.little
Literally: I long ago was excited very at time one I having nervousness a little.

De Klerk (2003b) found the irregular use of articles in her corpus of isiXhosa English, Mesthrie (2006) discovered it in BSAE, and Watermeyer (1996) found it in Afrikaans English. De Klerk, Mesthrie, and Watermeyer attribute the irregular uses to their respondents' L1.

Definiteness and indefiniteness in Bantu languages are intricate in nature and can hardly be defined in a straightforward fashion (Louwrens, 1983, p. 40). Bantu languages rely heavily on context and by strategies such as topicalization or the strategic use of demonstratives (Mesthrie & Bhat, 2008, p. 49) to determine definiteness and indefiniteness. SiSwati has no equivalence to the English definite and indefinite articles: **the**, **a** and **an**. Definiteness and indefiniteness in siSwati is achieved by the use of object markers or word order.

It appears, therefore that the respondents' fluctuation between the definite and indefinite values and the absence of any of these values could be attributed to L1 transfer effects. The way they

employ articles seems to be influenced by how they understand the context of the situation at hand in their L1 repertoire hence the mismatch in English.

6.4.4.3 PLURALIZATION ERRORS

Students' texts reflected the difficulty they had in marking singular and plural forms of nouns. Respondents seemed to have difficulties with regard to the addition and omission of the plural marker {-s} to nouns to mark plurality. For instance, the plural marker {-s} was extended to either non-count nouns, or nouns with an inherent plural grammatical marker or that marked plurality by adding a lexical item such as **pair of** before the noun. This was evidenced in the examples in (32) below.

(32)

- (a) *... find out what type of **equipments** are missing ...
...tfol-a kutsi lu-hlobo lu-ni lwe-tin-tfo
find-FV that COP.NPx11-type ENUM.11-sort POSS10-NPx10-thing
te-ku-sebent-a leti-nge-kho...
POSS10-NPx15-work-FV REL10-NEG.PART.COP-there
Literally: ... find out that it is type what.sort of things for working that are not there.
- (b) *I started learning vowels and **alphabets**²⁶ in siSwati using a book Lifa.
 Viz: I started learning vowels and consonants in siSwati using a book, Lifa.
Ng-a-cal-a nge-a-fundz-a bo-nkhamisa
SM1ps-FAR.PST-start-FV SM1ps-PST.NAR-learn-FV NPx2b-vowel
na-bo-ngwaca nge-si-Swati ngi-sebentis-a in-cwadzi
ASS-NPx2b-consonant INS-NPx7-siSwati SM1ps-use-FV NPx9-book
le-bit-w-a nge-li-fa
REL9-call-PASS-FV INS-NPx5.Lifa
Literally: I long ago started and I learnt vowels and consonants in siSwati I using book which is called by Lifa.
- (c) (c) *I used to write **homeworks**.
 Viz: I used to write homework.
Ng-a-ngi-vam-e ku-bhal-a imi-sebenti
SM1ps-FAR.PST-SM1ps-bec.used to-PST.CONJ NPx15-write-FV NPx4-work
ya-se-khaya
POSS4-LOC-home
Literally: I long ago I used to write works of at home.

²⁶ It would appear that the student has confused 'alphabet' with 'consonant', and, having chosen this incorrect lexical item, pluralizes it unnecessarily.

- (d) *Reading siSwati books was indeed part of my **upbringings**.

Viz: Reading siSwati books was indeed part of my upbringing.

Ku-fundz-a tin-cwadzi te-si-Swati nembala

NPx15-read-FV Npx10-book POSS10-NPx7-siSwati indeed

kw-a-ku-yi-Ø-ncenye

ye-ku-khulis-w-a

SM15-FAR.PST-SM15-COP-NPx9-part POSS9-NPx15-bring.up-PASS

kwa-mi

POSS15-ABS.PRON1ps

Literally: Reading books of siSwati it long ago was part of being brought up of mine.

Platt et al. (1984) report that the use of mass nouns as count nouns occurs in the New Englishes in India, Sri Lanka, Singapore and the Phillipines. De Klerk (2003b) identified this feature in Xhosa English, Gough (1996) identified it in BSAE, and Watermeyer (1996) identified it in Afrikaans English. Speakers of these Englishes did not only lose the distinction between mass and count nouns but also used determiners and quantifiers with mass nouns and attached a plural marker to nouns that were already in their plural form as shown in the examples below.

(33)

- (a) You must put more efforts into your work. (Gough, 1996, p. 63)
- (b) We did all our subject. (Gough, 1996, p. 61)
- (c) It's lot of peoples are living in shacks. (De Klerk, 1996, p. 233)
- (d) He is going to leave that things for you. (De Klerk, 2003b, p. 234)
- (e) They only three English-speaking family round here. (Watermeyer, 1996, p. 115)

Platt et al. (1984) argue that in the New Englishes, speakers appear to be unable to make a distinction between quantifiers which are used with countable and uncountable ones. In (33) (b) above, plurality appears to be contained in the quantifier **all** and the speaker appears not to consider the necessity of marking it on the noun.

In the context of the Swazi students, the difficulties students seem to have in marking singular and plural forms of nouns could be traced to the incongruity with which the English and siSwati form the plurals of nouns. In English the morpheme {-s} is added to nouns to mark plurality. In siSwati, singularity and plurality are marked in the prefixal morpheme of a noun. With the exception of Classes 14 (abstract noun class), 15 (infinitive class), 16 and 17 (locative classes), all the other classes of nouns have singular and plural counterparts and the morphemes by which singularity and plurality is marked do not map onto English. Therefore, students' use of irregular plurals has traces of L1 influence. The siSwati equivalent of words such as

‘underwear’, ‘homework’, ‘furniture’ and ‘equipment’ have their plurals as shown in (34) below.

(34)

	Singular	Plural
(a)	homework <i>um-sebenti w-e-khaya</i> NPx3-work POSS5-LOC-home	*homeworks <i>imi-sebenti y-e-khaya</i> NPx4-work POSS5-LOC-home
(b)	NPx9 equipment <i>in-tfo ye-ku-sebent-a</i> NPx9-thing POSS9-NPx15-work-FV	*equipments <i>tin-tfo te-ku-sebenta</i> NPx10-thing POSS10-NPx15-work-FV
(d)	furniture <i>i-fenisha</i> NPx5-furniture	*furnitures <i>ema-fenisha</i> NPx6-furniture

The pluralization of some nouns seems to be a generalization of the English rule of forming plurals of nouns by adding the morpheme {-s}. The frequency with which non-count nouns such as ***equipments** and ***underwears** occur in the writing of students lends support to Selinker’s (1972) interlanguage hypothesis that learners overgeneralize rules of the L2 and make irregular paradigms regular.

Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008, p. 53) argue that such regularization is “an intermediate stage (showing overgeneralization or hypercorrection) between minimal marking of plurality and the acquisition of the full target language system... (with some speakers fossilized in between)”.

Although Scarcella (2003, p.15) rightly advises that each time students learn new nouns, they must acquire their grammatical features, it appears that L1 speakers of siSwati learning Academic English as the L2 have not been able to acquire some of the features associated with such nouns. Scarcella (2003) places the onus to teach these features on instructors who themselves need to be conversant with the information, because if they are not, they are bound to face difficulties in instructing their students and assessing their proficiency in Academic English.

Scarcella (2003) also argues that some teachers fail to assist their students in laying down the foundation for the development of Academic English. This could be a result of teachers not spending much time engaging their students in tasks that develop their students’ Academic English and this could also be attributed to the fact that they themselves may not be using the

features of Academic English in instructing lessons and may therefore, not expect their students to use these features. This was attested to by a number of students who had noticed that their teachers were not conversant in English.

6.4.5 ERRORS OF REGISTER, STYLE AND SEMANTICS

6.4.5.1 CODE-SWITCHING/CODE-MIXING

Distinguishing between code-switching and -mixing, Chick and Wade (1997, p. 276) define code-switching as the use of more than one linguistic variety within the same conversation and code-mixing as the use of morphemes from more than one language within the same word. Apart from the students' own admissions to code-switching and -mixing, their texts also revealed a tendency to indulge in this practice, as is evident below:

(35)

- (a) *One day we were writing *tinanatelo*.
Viz: One day we were writing praise names.
- (b) **Ngito* understander *kancono mangikhuluma nemaSwati* if *ngibona kutsi abeva* in English.
Viz: So that I will understand better when I speak with Swazis if I realize they don't understand English.

The reasons students advanced for code-switching include:

It is the influence of the environment.
Some words are difficult and we don't know them in English.
It becomes difficult to translate some of the words to English.

When I don't know the word in English I use my mother tongue.

Students also attributed their switching between codes to the difficulty they experienced with idiomatic expressions which they knew in siSwati but were unable to find equivalences for in the target language: "Some of the words do not have or cannot be translated to the other language."

Other students attributed code-mixing to a contemporary freedom with regard to modern speech, one saying: "It is a way of life today."

Yet another respondent referred to the fact that code-mixing between siSwati and English can be a deliberate ploy on the part of the speaker to index his or her affluence:

Now that I'm at college I feel like other students will think I'm bragging about my previous school.

While the reasons students advanced for code-switching were consistent with those of some of their lecturers, the majority of students' responses suggest that they are ashamed of switching between codes. A range of studies on code-switching and mixing (Adendorff, 1996; Chick & Wade, 1997; Gough, 1996; Setati et al., 2002), however, view these practices as extremely valuable resources.

According to Adendorff (1996, p. 402) code-switching is a communicative resource that enables both instructors and learners in institutions of learning to achieve a considerable number and range of social and educational intents. It serves mainly as a contextualization cue, enabling instructors and their students to interpret academic goals, intentions and social relations (Adendorff, 1996, p. 389 & 404; Chick & Wade, 1997, p. 276). The ability to correctly interpret a contextualization cue on the part of the learner means that he or she shares the knowledge and understanding with others in an interaction, and this aids learning.

Furthermore, code-switching fulfils a social function by mediating between the complex content delivered by instructors and instructors' efforts to make themselves and their language understood. This in turn boosts the morale of the learners and lowers the affective filters (Krashen, 1985). When the affective filters are lowered, acquisition occurs.

Analysing data from a classroom situation and other interactional data recorded in a KwaZulu high school, Adendorff (1996) showed that code-switching is a potentially rich communicative resource both for the learner and the instructor. For L1 learners of isiZulu it indexed an English identity while retaining a Zulu identity. Gough (1996, p. 69) refers to it as: "A norm, the marked choice amongst certain social groups ... whose membership is symbolized by both languages."

For the instructors, Adendorff (1996) believes that code-switching and code-mixing can serve as tools to clarify information and can be employed as a strategy through which a teacher can check if students are following as well as to index solidarity.

According to Setati et al. (2002), code-mixing practices in schools in a multilingual context like South Africa are teaching and learning resources. Not only do they harness learners' language(s) as learning resources and thinking tools, they also aid classroom communication, expose students' alternative conceptions and provide the support required as the students

develop their proficiencies in English, the language of learning and teaching. Through code-mixing teachers could reformulate and clarify concepts.

Behaviourists would explain student code-mixing by referring to the phenomenon of mimicry. A student feeling the need to communicate proficiently in Academic English would imitate the instructors' usage of Academic English, and if that included some recourse to siSwati, they too would employ this strategy. When a task is challenging and complex in the target language, learners would turn to their L1 to perform the tasks (Swain & Lapkin, 2005).

My research revealed that instructors switched between codes in order to clarify certain concepts and 'to create a light moment'. This means that siSwati mixed with English is generally used by both students and teachers in their everyday encounters in Swaziland's classrooms. According to Butzkamm (2003), the advantage of carefully selecting the use of L1 helps in maintaining a relaxed atmosphere, thereby reducing Krashen's (1987) affective filters such as stress and frustration.

Both the students and lecturers explain code-mixing as involuntary, or a habit, having a pragmatic and normative appeal. From reasons such as these, I have established that code-mixing is a kind of 'linguistic culture' in tertiary institutions in Swaziland, being useful to negotiate meaning but also a practice that can demotivate learners who would quickly learn to expect inferior English from their instructors. According to Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis, when learners are not motivated enough and they are anxious, the affective filter is raised. When the affective filter is raised, a mental block is formed and it prevents any comprehensible input that could be used for acquisition.

From the studies conducted (Adendorff, 1996; Chick & Wade, 1997; Gough, 1996; Setati et al., 2002), it appears that code-switching has become a part of the South African linguistic culture, and as Blommaert (2005) and Blommaert (2010) suggest, this culture creates its own rules: peripheral normativity, or norms of the periphery. The low levels of education have become the rule rather than an exception. The localization of the code-mixing normativity assists the instructors to get through to their learners. While it can be viewed as a solution, localizing code-mixing is a problem in that it can be counter-productive.

According to Blommaert (2005, p. 396), "Localisation means moving away from the norms of the centre which are hegemonic in the end."

Thus, when students graduate into the professions they are training for, the errors in their writing will not be perceived as “tokens of local cultural creativity and peripheral normativity but as indexes of poor academic literacy levels” (Blommaert, 2005, p. 396).

Therefore the features of inclusion at the local levels of tertiary institutions in Swaziland would eventually become objects of exclusion at the world of work.

6.4.5.2 DIRECT TRANSLATIONS

I observed that students’ texts often included incorrect English idiom in that they translated phrases or words literally from siSwati to English.

(36)

- (a) *The sun was **cooking** at the Mankayane bus rank.

Viz: It was hot at the Mankayane bus rank.

Li-langa be-li-pheka e-Mankayane e-si-khumulw-eni

NPx5-sun PST-SM5-cook LOC-Mankayane LOC-NPx7-rank-LOC

se-ma-bhasi.

POSS7-NPx6-bus

Literally: Sun it was cooking at Mankanyane at rank of buses.

In siSwati the act of cooking is *ku-pheka* ‘to cook’. To say the sun **was cooking** *belipheka* is acceptable in siSwati but the equivalent is incorrect in English.

- (b) *All the words in siSwati have got **names** in English.

Viz: All words in siSwati have their equivalences in English.

O-nkhe ema-gama nge-si-Swati a-ne-ma-gama

QNT6-all NPx6-word INS-NPx7-siSwati SM6-have-NPx6-name

e-si-Ngis-ini

LOC-NPx7-English-LOC

Literally: All names/words in SiSwati they have names/words in English.

In siSwati both lexical items: **words** and **names** are referred to as *emagama*. The synonym *emabito* is not common in some dialects of the language. Students could be translating this synonym of **words** into English.

- (c) *I **carried my shoulders** everywhere I went.

Viz: Wherever I went, I was very proud.

Ng-:-etfwal-a ema-hlombe a-mi nobe-ngabe

SM1ps-FAR.PST-carry-FV NPx6-shoulder POSS6-ABS.PRON1ps no.matter

ngi-y-a-phi

SM1ps-go.to-FV-where

Literally: I long ago carried shoulders of mine no matter I go where.

The siSwati expression of ‘carrying shoulders’ is equivalent to being pompous or proud of something. Students have translated the siSwati idiom literally into English, and in so-doing have produced a nonsensical sentence.

The lexical errors above are lexico-semantic in nature and as such could be puzzling to a native speaker of English and impede comprehension. While the words are acceptable in siSwati their semantic value in English is different.

6.4.5.3 SPELLING PROBLEMS

Respondents’ writing exhibited wrong spelling of lexical items, sometimes suggesting that their pronunciation affected their spelling. Misspelt words such as ***conjucive**, ***resite**, ***limozen**, ***mananger** and ***fill** occurred and are reproduced in Example (37) below. Spelling in siSwati is acoustic. This means that in siSwati each letter represents a single sound and individual words are spelt as they are produced. This is echoed by Corum (1994, p. 2.2) who argues that with respect to the orthography of siSwati “the relationship between the symbols used to represent the sounds and the sounds themselves is fairly close.” (Doke, 1954, p. 47) shares the same sentiments when he describes the orthographies of the Southern Bantu languages as phonetic and the incorrect spelling of English words by students can thus be attributed to this feature of siSwati spelling and orthography.

English spelling, however, does not accurately represent the sounds of spoken words and its orthography does not always tally with English pronunciation. English is replete with silent letters and irregular means of graphically expressing various sounds. Errors like those in Example (37) below appear to be a result of this incongruity in the two languages’ orthographic systems. Spelling errors in the students’ texts appear to be a result of L1 interference: for instance, **conducive** could be spelt as ***conjusiv** as the English phonogram /nd/ is spelt with /-nj-/ in siSwati.

(37)

- (a) ***I** had to be careful as the environment was not **conjucive**.
Viz: I had to be careful as the environment was not conducive.
- (b) ***They** ran to the **limozen** that waited for them.
Viz: They ran to the limousine that was waiting for them.
- (c) ***The mananger** toured me around the building.
Viz: The manager took me on a tour around the building.

- (d) *Sometimes you **fill** like the person you are talking to is not understanding what exactly you are doing.
 Viz: Sometimes you feel like the person you are talking does not understand what you are doing.

6.4.5.4 LITERAL TRANSLATIONS

Loan translations or calquing (Downing, 1997; McCormick, 2002b) featured prominently in students texts. Calques or item-for-item translations entail interpreting a word directly from the source to the target language. As demonstrated in the sentences in Example (38) below, the English sentences have been directly translated from the respondents' L1. As per their attestations in the interviews, respondents tended to translate from siSwati to English if they could not express themselves in the L2. This was also prompted by the fact that they thought through their L1 but had had to write texts in the L2.

(38)

- (a) *I am a swazi **by nation**.
 Viz: (I am a Swazi national or I am a Swazi.)
 *Ngi-li-Swati nge-si-ve
 SM1ps-COP.NPx5-Swazi INS-NPx7-nation
Literally: I it is Swazi by nation.

- (b) *Their faces **were written excitement**.
 Viz: The faces were lit with excitement.
 Bu-so ba-bo be-bu-bhal-w-e
 NPx14-face POSS14-ABS.PRON2 PST-SM14-write-PASS-PST.CONJ
 in-jabulo
 NPx9-excitement
Literally: Faces of theirs they were written excitement.

From the examples above it appears that translation could be attributed to the students' L1. According to McCormick (2002b, p. 232) calques are a very common phenomenon in L2 speaker's texts, irrespective of the languages involved.

6.4.5 ELABORATE SENTENCE STRUCTURE/VERBOSITY

Students tended to answer interview questions using elaborate, rather than simple sentences. Their essays too demonstrated sentences that were very elaborate and this rendered them poorly structured. In Academic English this is referred to as redundancy and is explained as the quality of being redundant, that is exceeding what is necessary or normal. The sentence in Example (39) below illustrates this feature:

(39)

*It is the English that is learnt at school which is universal – by universal I mean even at the States of America, they are taught this English, this enables one to be able to communicate in all countries If I may say... Even if you went to India or any African country at least some people would understand you (those educated people).

Viz: It is the universal English learnt at school all around the world.

Ngu-le-si-Ngisi lesi-fundv-w-a e-si-kolw-eni
 COP-1DEM7-NPx7-English REL7-learn-PASS-FV LOC-NPx7-school-LOC
lo-nga-si-sebentis-a noma ngu-kuphi nge-ku-ts-i noma
 REL2ps-POT-OM7-use-FV or COP-where INS-INF-say-FV or
ngu-kuphi ngi-sh-o na-se-Ø-Melika
 COP-where SM1ps-mean-FV ASS-LOC-NPx9-America
ba-fundzis-w-a le-si-Ngisi s-ent-a noma
 SM2-teach-PASS-FV 1DEM7-NPx7-English SM7-make-FV no.matter
ngu-Ø-bani a-khon-e ku-khulum-a ku-wo
 COP-NPx1a-who SM1.SBJV-be.able-SBJV INF-talk-FV LOC-ABS.PRON6
o-nkhe ema-ve, uma ngi-nga-sh-o. Noma
 QNT6-all NPx6-country if SM1ps-POT-say.so-FV. Even.if
u-y-a e-Ø-Ndiya noma li-phi li-ve la
 SM2ps-go.to-FV LOC-NPx9-India or ENUM5-which NPx5-country here
e-Ø-Africa laba-nye ba-ntfu ba-ta.wu-ku-v-a
 LOC-NPx9-Africa ADJ2-some NPx2-person SM2-FUT-OM2ps-hear-FV
(labo laba-fundz-ile)
 (2DEM2 REL2-study-PST.DISJ)

Literally: It is this English that is learnt at school which you can it use anywhere and to say anywhere I mean also in America they are taught this English it makes no matter whom she should be able to talk in them all in countries, if I may say so. Even if you go to India or whichever country here in Africa some people will understand you (those who are educated).

A feature that is peculiar to siSwati is the superfluity in statements. According to De Koning (2006) siSwati presents information in a very elaborate sentence structure. Structuring and presenting information in this manner is directly related to Swazi cultural practices of including as much information in a description as possible. Culturally this is to ensure that the message is clear to the listener. To exclude some information may be regarded as rude or disrespectful. To make an expression clear or to emphasize an idea, Swazis resort to ‘unnecessary’ repetitions of the same idea which in English would be viewed as a tautology, needless qualification, an unnecessary repetition of words and as such redundant. The inclusion of a plethora of information renders sentences too long and poorly structured. It is clear from the analysis of their writings that Swazi students in this study transfer the organization and sequencing of

discourse and styles of social interaction (Saville-Troike, 1984, p. 201) of their L1 into their Academic English.

6.4.5.6 TAUTOLOGY

Coupled with elaborate sentence structures identified in students' texts was tautology. Tautology refers to unnecessary but usually unintentional repetition of meaning by means of different words. It is saying the same thing twice and it is regarded as a fault of style. It appears that in an attempt to make the meaning clearer, students tended to give surplus information with regard to individual words, resulting in the semantic meaning of lexical items being reduplicated. While it could, to a limited extent, be traced to the students' L1 pragmatic pattern, in English it is tautology. Sentences in example (40) below illustrate how tautology is transferred from the L1 (where it is acceptable) to the L2 (where it is unacceptable):

(40)

- (a) *An **ugly bad looking** guy appeared.

Viz: An ugly guy appeared.

Lomu-bi lo-bukek- a kabi um-fana w-a-chamuk-a

ADJ1-ugly REL1-look-FV badly NPx1-boy SM1-FAR.PST-appear-FV

Literally: This ugly one who looks badly boy he long ago appeared.

- (b) *It is the lack of **lexical vocabulary**.

Viz: It is the lack of vocabulary.

**Kw-eswelek-a kw-ema-gama Ø-ema-gama*

COP-NPx15-be.lacking-FV POSS15-NPx6-word POSS-NPx6-word

Literally: It is lack of names/word for words/names.

Example (a) is tautologous in English, but in siSwati the repeated lexical item is used for emphasis. Example (b) is incorrect in both English and siSwati, in the latter case due to the fact that siSwati does not distinguish between **words**, **vocabulary** and **lexical items**.

6.4.7 DIRECT TRANSLATION OF IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

Another interesting find in the students' writings were idiomatic expressions. These are metaphorical expressions whose meaning is not deductible from the individual lexical items that constitute them but is resultant from the combination of the words that make the proverb/idiom. To Chomsky (1980) idiomatic expressions are non-compositional strings

whose figurative meanings are not related in any way to the literal meanings of their individual words.

In any language, idioms are socio-culturally determined and are indicators of the wisdom and observational skills of the language of which they are part. To a speaker, they are indicators of mastery of that language (Arua, 1998; Kamwangamalu 1996).

While the idiomatic expressions used by the students could be puzzling to a non-native speaker of siSwati, they have a direct resemblance to their siSwati counterparts as the sentences in Example (41) below show.

(41)

(a) *Like bees sucking nectar from various flowers, and so did the people moving from one shop to the next.

Viz: The people were moving from one shop to the other like bees.

Njenge-tin-yosi ti-muny-a lu-ju e-tim-bal-ini
Like-NPx10-bee SM10-suck-FV NPx11-honey LOC-NPx10-flower-LOC
let-ehlukene-e²⁷, kanjalo ne-ba-ntfu be-ba-hamb-a
REL10-bec.different-ANT so ASS-NPx2-person PST-SM2-go-FV
ku-suk-a ku-si-nye si-tolo ba-y-e
INF-leave-FV LOC-ENUM7-one NPx7-shop SM2-go.to-SBJV
ku-lesi-nye
LOC-ADJ7-another

Literally: Like bees sucking honey from flowers different, so also people were going from one shop and going to another.

(a) *I stood like wet chicken at the end of the field.

Viz: I was tongue-tied

Ng-:-em-a njenge-n-khukhu le-manti
SM1ps-FAR.PST-stand-FV like-NPx9-chicken REL9-wet
e-ku-gcin-eni kwe-n-simu.
LOC-NPx15-end-LOC POSS15-NPx9-field

Literally: I long ago stood like chicken wet at end of field.

According to Kecskes (2000), idiomatic expressions such as the ones above indicate metaphorical competence in the L1, but it appears that with the siSwati students surveyed for this study, this competence is not matched by a similar metaphorical competence in the L2. In such cases students are:

²⁷ -ehlukene < -ehlukan- + the discontinuous morpheme, > -ehlukaine > -ehlukene, a process known as 'imbrication' in Bantu linguistics. See: Bastin, Y. (1983) *La finale verbale -IDE et l'imbrication en Bantou*. Tervuren: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale.

More likely to rely on the literal meanings of figurative utterances and on their L1 conceptual system when producing and comprehending figurative phrases (in Cieslicka, 2006, p.119).

According to Matlock and Heredia (2002), the role of literal and figurative meanings in the processing and production of idiomatic expressions in an L2 is determined by the L2 learners' proficiency in the language. Inexperienced L2 learners establish direct connections between literal and non-literal meanings of figurative expressions. This would be followed by a literal translation of second language idiomatic expression into the first language. This happens when users of an L2 do not have a native like command of the language. Swazi higher education students seem to fall into this category of learners.

Investigating the forms and functions of siSwati colloquial English, Arua (1998, p.11) observed that while idiomatic expressions used by the University of Swaziland students were a direct translation from their first language to English they replicated the transparency of idiomatic expressions in Standard English. This was also the case with idiomatic expressions used by students in the surveyed institutions.

6.4.5.8 SEMANTIC SHIFT

Students' texts also exhibited semantic shift. Semantic shift occurs when a word acquires a new or specialized meaning in addition to the original one (Kamwangamula & Chisanga 1996; Kamwangamalu & Moyo, 2003). Downing (1997) and Minow (2010) refer to this phenomenon as semantic extension and define it as a process where an existing word or a borrowed word takes on an additional meaning without losing its original meaning. For instance, Buthelezi (1995, p. 246) cites the example of a **matchbox** whose meaning has been extended to 'a small house built by township authority'. SiSwati-speaking students' writing evidenced semantic extensions as shown below:

(42)

- (a) *It hasn't reached its standard because there are new things or words I learn everyday especially from elders.

Viz: It is still not up to standard because there are still new things or words which I am learning everyday from those older than me.

Li-se-nga-ka-fik-i *e-zing-eni*
 SM5-PERS-NEG.PART-PST.NEG-reach-NEG LOC-standard-LOC
la-lo *ngoba* *ku-se-ne-tin-tfo* *letin-sha*
 POSS5-ABS.PRON5 because SM17-PERS-ASS-NPx10-thing ADJ10-new
noma ema-gama *le-ngi-wa-fundz-a* *o-nkhe* *ma-langa*
 or NPx6-word REL6-SM1ps-OM6-learn-FV QNT6-all NPx6-day
ku-laba-dzala
 LOC-ADJ2-old

Literally: It has still not arrived at standard of it because there still are things new or words which I them learn every day.

- (b) *The girl was ripe.

Viz.: The girl was mature.

In-tfombatana *be-se-yi-vuts-i-w-e*
 NPx9-girl PST-CPL-SC9-bec.ripe/mature-ANT-PASS-ANT
Literally: Girl she already was ripe/mature.
Literally: Girl she already was ripe/mature.

In siSwati, *labadzala* 'elders' refers predominantly to those in authority, such as traditional leaders, chiefs, and members of council. The verb *-vutfhwa* can be translated as both 'become mature' and 'become ripe' in English, but only 'mature' is normally used with reference to people. Then the siSwati-speaker extends application of the alternative translation 'ripe' to human beings, which is not usual.

6.4.5.9 INFORMAL REGISTER

Students' essays showed that students appeared not to have a sophisticated grasp of what constitutes a formal register since they allowed colloquial expressions into their writing. The fact that students grapple with register is exemplified in their sentences below:

(43)

- (a) *I went to a restaurant in the mall so I can **fill up my tummy**.

Viz: I went to a restaurant in the Mall to eat.

Ng-a-y-a *e-ndl-ini* *ye-ku-dlel-a*
 SM1ps-FAR.PST-go-FV LOC-NPx9-house-LOC POSS9-NPx15-eat.at-FV
e-Ø-Mall *kute* *ngi-to-khon-a* *ku-gcwalis-a*
 LOC-NPx9-Mall so,that SM1ps-VEN-be.able-FV INF-fill-FV
si-su *sa-mi*
 NPx7-stomach POSS7-ABS.PRON1ps

Literally: I long ago went to house of eating at at Mall so that I come to be able to fill stomach my.

(b) *Before I knew it, it was **knock off time**.

Viz: Before I realized, it was time to go home.

Ngi-nga-ka-telel-i, be-se-ku-si-khatsi
 SM1ps-NEG.PART-CPL-take.notice-NEG PST-CPL-SM17-COP.NPx7-time
se-ku-shayis-a

POSS7-INF-knock.off.work -FV

Literally: I not yet having realized, it already was time for to knock off work.

(c) * I was born in a siSwati speaking home – so learning my mother tongue was **no big deal**.

Viz: I was born in a siSwati-speaking home, so learning my mother tongue was not difficult.

Ng-a-talel-w-a e-khaya leli-khulum-a
 SM1ps-FAR.PST-give.birth.in/at-PASS-FV LOC-home 3REL5-speak-FV
si-Swati ngako ku-fundz-a lu-lwimi lwa-Ø-make
 NPx7-siSwati so INF-learn-FV NPx11-tongue POSS11-NPx1a-mother
wa-mi be-ku-nge-si-yo in-tfo
 POSS1-ABS.PRON1ps PST-SM17-NEG.PART-COP-ABS.PRON9 NPx9-thing
len-khulu
 ADJ9-big

Literally: I long ago was born in in home which speaks siSwati so learning tongue of mother of mine it was not it thing big.

According to Scarcella (2003), the discourse component of Academic English enables learners to use linguistic forms and meanings to communicate coherently in an organized way (Canale & Swain 1980, p.188). In Academic English, this component of linguistic skill in the L2 involves knowledge of the basic devices used in everyday English.

While the sentences in Example 43 above demonstrate the students' lack of sensitivity to the register of Academic English, the colloquial forms cannot be traced to the students' L1 where there are polite, more appropriate terms which would have been more apposite in an academic context.

6.4.5.10 UNCLEAR/AMBIGUOUS EXPRESSIONS

Both students' texts and lecturers' responses to questions exhibited expressions that were either not clear or could be described as ambiguous. While Arua (1998, p. 145) argues that ambiguity is not remarkable because it is an inherent part of language, the ambiguous expressions of the respondents was a cause for concern. For instance, Example (44) below raises the question of whether it is the **application** for a secretarial position that has been successful or the **secretarial post** itself.

(44)

*You applied for a job in our company for the secretary post **which has been successful** and you have to start tomorrow morning.

Viz: Your application for the position of secretary in our company has been successful; you have to start working tomorrow morning.

W-a-applayel-a um-sebenti e-n-kampan-eni

SM2ps-FAR.PST-apply.for-FV NPx3-work LOC-NPx9-company-LOC

y-etfu nge-m-sebenti we-ku-b-a

POSS9-ABS.PRON1pp INS-NPx3-work POSS3-NPx15-become-FV

ngu-Ø-mabhalane lo-phumelel-e ku-mel-e

COP-NPx1a-secretary REL3-bec.successful-ANT SM17-bec.necessary-ANT

u-cal-e kusasa ekuseni

SC2ps-start-SBJV tomorrow morning

Literally: You long ago applied for job in company ours about job to become it is secretary that was successful; it is necessary you should start tomorrow morning.

Clarity of expression is important in Academic English. The above sentence in (44) is incorrect in both the L1 and L2 and as such it would appear to be a failure to express oneself on the part of the students and cannot be attributable to L1 interference.

6.4.6 ERRORS OF SYNTAX

6.4.6.1 SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

Of note, was the high incidence of concord mistakes and the frequency with which the subject-verb agreement forms in the texts of the students were confused, omitted or altered. Students appear to have problems inflecting verbs especially for the third person singular and plural nouns. The alternation and omission of the third person singular with zero forms, the addition of {-s} for plural forms shown in the examples below are witness to this.

(45)

(a) *A midwife **have** to think.

Viz: A midwife **has** to think.

Um-belekisi ku-fanel-e a-cabang-e

NPx1-midwife SM15-bec.fitting-ANT SM1.SBJV-think-FV

Literally: Midwife it is fitting she should think.

(b) *This news **were** good.

Viz: This news was good.

Le-tin-dzaba be-ti-mnandzi.

DEM10.NPx10-news PST-SM10-good

Literally: These news they were good.

(c) *I interact with students who **speaks** most of the language.

Viz: I talk with students who speak a great deal of this language.

Ngi-khulum-a ne-ba-fundzi laba-khulum-a
 SM1ps-talk-FV ASS-NPx2-student REL2-speak-FV
loku-nyenti kwa-lo-lu-lwimi.

ADJ17-much POSS-1DEM11-NPx11-language

Literally: I talk with students who speak much of this language.

The subject–verb agreement error has also been found in African English in general and BSAE in particular (Minow, 2010, p. 63). According to her, “speakers of various New Englishes tend to simplify verbal concord, for example by omitting the third person singular -s.” De Klerk (2003b) identified this feature in Xhosa English, Gough (1996) identified it in BSAE, McCormick (2002b) in a Cape Town school, Platt et al. (1984) in Indian and Philippine English, Scott and Tucker (1974) among Arabic-speaking students learning English, and Watermeyer (1996) in Afrikaans English.

According to Greenbaum (1991, p.139), in English the agreement phenomenon is in terms of number and person between the finite verbs and their arguments. On non-finite verbs, agreement is in terms of number, person, number and gender or case agreement between nominal and prepositional heads. Of note is that in English it is the subject that features prominently in the agreement phenomenon as singular subjects occasion singular verbs and plural subjects, plural verbs.

In siSwati it is both the subject noun and object noun phrases that have definitive relationships with the verbs in a sentence, and this is shown by the subject and object concords affixed to the verb stems (Taljaard et al., 1991, p. 26). However, while the verbs agree with their subjects and objects in terms of number, there is no distinction in the verb in terms of person. The agreement between the subject or object and verb is determined by the prefix of the class of the subject or object NPx.

According to Doke (1954, p. 47) Bantu languages engage a concordial agreement in their sentence structure. He argues that:

all pronouns, qualifying words, and predicates relating to a noun assume a prefixal element in agreement with that noun, and related in form to its prefix. These concords are usually called alliterative, since they are apt to contain the characteristic ‘letter’ of the noun-prefix; although in some cases, for various reasons, this ‘letter’ is either not found or is much disguised.

The nouns in each class share the same kind of prefix and they also therefore share the same kind of concord. The exception to this is Class 1a and 2b. Nouns in these classes do not form subject concords of their own, but share the subject concords of Class 1. This observation is echoed by Corum (n.d., p. 5.4) who also argues that in siSwati in almost every case the verb stem requires a prefix that agrees with the subject or object. The prefix is the subject or object concord.

A close examination of the concordial system in siSwati and the literal translation of the students' examples into the L1 above together suggest that the confusion can be attributed to some extent to the concordial agreement of nouns and their verbs in siSwati. Since students confessed to translating to siSwati before writing the English equivalences, the nouns too might have been classed before the translations. For instance the noun **news** is *tindzaba* in siSwati. It belongs to Class 10. The agreement marker it would take in a sentence would correspond to its plural form. Therefore, a sentence such as: *This news **were** good, which in siSwati literally translates to *Letindzaba betimnandzi* is grammatical. The subject **news** *tindzaba* aligns and is in harmony with the verb to be past plural. This seems to prompt students to transfer this feature of siSwati to English. As Minow (2010, p. 63) rightly argues that concord errors are a result of L1 influence, the concord errors siSwati L1 students make can be attributed to their L1.

However, the errors in (a) and (c) could be couched in assumptions that make the learner formulate hypotheses about the structure of the language (Bell, 1981, p.180). Since English nouns do not suffix {-s} in the singular, by analogy verbs in agreement with them should not have a {-s}. Nouns in their plural forms typically suffix the morpheme {-s}. To learners it follows that verbs in agreement with such nouns should also suffix {-s} to mark plurality. The algorithms or principles students seem to use to hypothesize about subject verb agreement are as follows:

- (a) If a grammatical feature can be added to an agent noun to make it plural, so can it be added to the action that it performs.
- (b) If a grammatical feature does not feature in a noun that functions as an agent, so can it not feature in the action that it performs.

This means that while in Academic English a plural noun agrees with a verb that is not inflected with an {-s}, in students' writing the noun that has an {-s} ending has to agree with a verb that similarly has a {-s} ending. Of note is that the hypotheses students make results in error and if the errors are not rectified, according to the Interlanguage Hypothesis, they fossilize.

In a study on code-mixing in a Cape Town school, McCormick (2002b, p. 230) found similar errors in the subject–verb agreement system. The students placed standard plural forms after singular subjects and vice versa. According to her, this practice presented:

a tension between two tendencies, the one towards simplification (moving towards having one verb form for both singular and plural subjects, and the other towards regularising ways of indicating singular and plural in nouns and verbs (word final /-s/ for plurals but not for singular) (McCormick, 2002b, p. 230).

She argues that the violation of the verb-placement rule (that is of placing {-s} on verb to indicate third person singular present tense) is:

evidence of a cross-linguistic equation of syntactic patterns and it may be based on the extension of pluralising nouns. English nouns normally add /-s/ to indicate plural. Thus we find that verbs may take a word final /-s/ if the subject is plural, and have no word final where the subject is singular (McCormick, 2002b, p. 230) .

Therefore, while the problem with subject-verb-agreement has traces of the students' L1, it can also be attributed to the generalizations rules that the students have formed about this feature of Academic English.

6.4.6.2 WORD ORDER PERMUTATIONS

While siSwati has a flexible syntax, like the right-branching structure of Standard English (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008, p. 78) students struggled to produce fluent SVO patterns. Word order combinations referring to oneself and another person, in particular, appeared to be problematic in the learners' writings. This was exemplified by such constructions as the following:

(46)

(a) *I and my new friend.

Viz: My new friend and I.

Mi-ne ne-m-ngani wa-mi
 ABS.PRON1ps-STAB ASS-NPx1-friend POSS1-ABS.PRON1ps
lomu-sha
 ADJ1-new
Literally: I and friend of mine new.

(b) *Me and my mother went to town.

Viz: My mother and I went to town.

Mi-ne na-Ø-make wa-mi
 ABS.PRON1ps-STAB ASS-NPx1a-mother POSS1-ABS.PRON1ps
si-y-e e-dolobh-eni
 SM1pp-go.to-PST.CONJ LOC-town-LOC
Literally: I and mother of mine we went to town.

In Standard English it is grammatically correct and more polite to mention the other person first before referring to oneself (Linnegar, 2009, p. 10). However, this is contrary to siSwati where it is still grammatical to say: *Mine nemngani wami* ‘I and my friend’. In siSwati the speaker comes first and then the other party. Similarly while the syntax in the examples in (47) below is not acceptable in English, it is correct in siSwati.

(47)

- (a) *You need to find what type of equipments are missing and **where is the cause of** the problem.

Viz: You need to find what type of equipment is missing and **where the cause of the problem is**.

U-dzing-a ku-tfol-a kutsi lu-hlobo lu-ni
 SM2ps-need-FV INF-find-FV that COP.NPx11-type ENUM11-what.sort
lwe-ma-thulusi lolu-nge-kho ne-kutsi
 POSS11-NPx6-tool REL11-NEG.PART-there ASS-that
si-kuphi si-susa se-n-kinga

SM7-where NPx7-cause POSS7.NPx9-problem

Literally: You need to find that it is type what.sort of tools which are not there and that it is where the cause of problem.

- (b) *I went outside to see exactly how **was the weather**.

Viz: I went outside to see how **the weather was**.

Ng-a-phumel-a nga-phandle ku-bon-a ngempela
 SM1ps-FAR.PST-go.out-FV INS-outside INF-see-FV exactly
kutsi si-njani si-mo se-li-tulu
that SM7-how NPx7-state POSS7-NPx5-weather

Literally: I long ago went out outside to see exactly that it is how state of weather.

While the grammaticality of the sentences in (48) above is incorrect in Academic English, its incorrectness can be attributed to the student's L1.

6.4.6.3 PROBLEMS WITH REPORTED QUESTIONS

In reported questions a general pattern of respondents' preposing or permuting the auxiliary or modal verb with the subject was observed. Arua (1997, p. 143) and Arua (2004, p. 265) refer to this practice as the inversion of the auxiliary verb and subject in reported questions. He identified this feature in Botswana English and Swazi English, and Gough (1996) identified it in BSAE. Watermeyer (1996) identified it in Afrikaans English. In all instances respondents "used the interrogative word order after WH-conjunctions in subordinate clauses" (Watermeyer, 1996, p. 113). According to Arua (1998, 2004), they inverted the auxiliary verb and the subject in reported questions. This is illustrated in example (49) below. Arua (1998, 2004) gives the following of its usage in Swazi and Botswana English.

(48)

- (a) I must find out when is he coming. (Watermeyer, 1996, p. 113)
 (b) Ask your mummy can you go with us. (Arua, 1998, 143)
 (c) He asked him what was he looking for. (Arua, 2004, p. 265).

In the current study, instances of the inversion of the auxiliary verb and subject in reported questions were evidenced in sentences such as those in Example (49) below.

(49)

- (a) *I asked myself numerous times that **how would I** survive without parental guidance.
 Viz: I asked myself numerous times how I would survive without parental guidance.
Ng-a-ti-but-a ti-khatsi leti-nyenti kutsi
 SM1ps-FAR.PST-REFL-ask-FV NPx8-time ADJ8-many that
ngi-ta.wu-phil-a njani nga-phandle kwe-ku-condzis-w-a
 SM1ps-FUT-survive-FV how INS-outside POSS17-NPx15-guide-PASS-FV
ba-tali.
 AGT.NPx2-parent
Literally: I long ago myself asked times many that I shall survive how outside of being guided by parents.

- (b) *I hardly sleep that night, the night dragged because I kept thinking as to where **will I** go from here?
 Viz: I hardly slept that night; the night dragged, because I kept thinking where I would go from here.
A-ngi-khon-anga ku-lal-a lobo bu-suku, bu-suku
 NEG-SM1ps-be.able-NEG INF-sleep 3DEM14 NPx14-night NPx14-night
b-a-dvons-a ngoba ng-a-ngi-phike
 SM14-FAR.PST-drag-FV because SM1ps-FAR.PST-SM1ps-keep.on
ku-cabang-a kutsi ngi-ta.wu-ku-y-a kuphi uma
 INF-think-FV that SM1ps-FUT-STAB-go.to-FV where when
ngi-suk-a la.
 SM1ps-move.from-FV here
Literally: I could not to sleep that night, night it long ago dragged, because I was keeping on thinking that I shall go to where when I leave from here.

Arua (1998, p. 143) observed that the subject-verb inversion that appeared in the reported question seemed to be a strategy for keeping the original question in view as it made the original question easily retrievable.

In Academic English the preposing or permuting the auxiliary or modal verb with the subject is ungrammatical. In reported speech, the tendency is to change the tense of the verb in order

to indicate that something is being reported and is not direct speech. Where there is a *wh*-question, the question word is used in the reported question, but there is no auxiliary verb. The word order is also as in affirmative sentences. This means that the person, and the expression of time, changes and there is a backshift of tenses, as is shown in the examples below.

(50)

- a) Direct question: “What time does the bell ring?”
- b) Reported question: He asked what time the bell rang.
- c) Direct question: Do you like watching movies?
- d) Reported question: She asked me if I liked watching movies.

As the examples above illustrate, in reported questions the subject precedes the modal or auxiliary verb. The siSwati translations of the sentences in (49) above, however, reveal syntactic evidence of transfer from siSwati to English. Thus we can conclude that the problem of preposing or permuting the auxiliary or modal verb with the subject is traceable to the students’ L1 as the siSwati versions of the English sentences are grammatical. The above pattern shows that “the question word is kept *in situ* in accordance with the syntactic structure of the background language, siSwati” (Kamwangamalu & Chisanga, 1996, p. 296). As illustrated in Chapter 4, in siSwati the tendency is that the lexical item that marks a question is positioned at the end of a clause.

6.4.6.4 RETENTION OF ANTI-DELETIONS

Respondents’ writings demonstrated retention of morphemes that would have been otherwise deleted in Academic English. Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008, p. 92) refer to the process by which forms are retained or recovered as ‘undeletions’ and de Koning (2009) calls them anti-deletions. These included verb complementation such as the retention of the infinitive **to** with verbs such as **make**, **for** after **request**, **awaiting** and **seek**. Also in this category is the dummy **about** after **discuss**, the dummy **it** after verbs such as **make clear**, the dummy **it** before the verb **be**, the complementiser **that** after **as you know**, **as I said**. The examples in (51) illustrate this.

(51)

- (a) *I had to request
- for**
- help from my superiors.

Viz: I had to request help from my superiors.

Be-ku-mel-e ngi-cel-e lu-sito ku-ba-phatsi

PST-have.to-FV SM1ps-request-SBJV NPx11-help LOC-NPx2-superior

ba-mi

POSS2-ABS.PRON1ps

Literally: It was necessary I should request help from superiors my.

- (b) *Likely [sic: Luckily] she said, sit down awaiting
- for**
- the next lecturer.

Viz: Luckily she said we should sit down and wait for the next lecturer.

Nge-Ø-nhlanhla w-a-ts-i hlal-a-ni phasi

INS-NPx9-luck SM1-FAR.PST-say-FV sit-FV-pl down

ni-mel-e um-fundzisi lo-t-a-ko.

SM2pp-wait.for-SBJV NPx1-lecturer REL1-come-FV-REL.

Literally: Luckily she long ago said: sit down you should wait for teacher who is coming.

Schmied (1991) found that verb complementation was wide-ranging in African English. He attributed this to the misperception African speakers of English had with verbs which were synonymous yet required different ways of complementation. He cited **let** and **allow** as verbs which had a similar meaning but used different complementation. With the use of **to** before verbs such as **make**, Schmied is of the view that African speakers of English often neglect the difference between an infinitive and gerund construction and appear to choose which ones to use randomly (Minow, 2010, p. 64). Gough (1996, p. 62) also found patterns of complementation in BSAE such as:

(52)

- a) *That thing made me to know God.

- b) *I tried that I might see her.

According to Scott and Tucker (1974), and later Platt et al. (1984), undeletion errors are both intra-lingual. They observed that the retention of, for instance, **for** after **request**, **seek**, and **awaiting** can be traced back to the English verbs **ask**, **look** and **wait** which are followed by **for**. Since **request** is a polite form of **asking for** something, and **seek** and **wait** are synonymous with the phrasal verbs **look for** and **wait for** respectively, it appears that students overgeneralize the rule of when to use the preposition **for** and use it with unfitting verbs. Examples (51) (a) and (b) attest to this generalization.

In siSwati, *njengoba wati* ‘as you know’ can either be or not be followed by the complementiser ‘that’ *kutsi*. Both forms are acceptable and grammatical. The students’ variation of the complementiser ‘that’ after ‘as you know’ can thus also be traced to their L1.

It seems as if students translate their siSwati subjunctives into English infinitives because in English, after the verb **want**, one uses the infinitive, e.g. ‘I want to go home home.’ Possibly, L1 students are over-generalizing this rule to other verbs that have some strong element of compulsion, such as **make**, as evidenced in the sentence in Example (53) below.

(53)

*He **made** me to write it again.

Viz: He made me write it again.

U-ng-ent-e kutsi ngi-yi-bhal-e futsi

SM1-SM1ps-make-PST that SM1ps-OM9-write-SBJ again

Literally: She made me that I should it write again.

De Klerk and Gough (2002, p.362) refer to this as an ‘idiosyncratic pattern of complementation’ which suggests that it might be difficult to use language transfer as an explanation for this particular feature of students’ English.

6.4.6.5 ERRORS WITH RELATIVE CLAUSES

There was a tendency among respondents to use relative clauses or modifiers way after the head nouns they modified. They split or separated the head noun from its modifier, thus rendering a structure where the modifier was misplaced (not clear which item it modified) as shown in the examples below:

(54)

(a) *If there is no examination bed, she can use benches joining them together.

Viz: If there is no examination bed, one can use benches, and join them together...

Uma ku-te um-bhedze we-ku-hlolel-a

If NPx17-nothing NPx3-bed POSS3-NPx15-examine-FV

a-nga-sebentis-a ema-bhentji a-wa-hlanganis-e

SM1.POT-POT-use-FV NPx6-bench SM1-SBJV-OM6-join.together-SBJV

Literally: If there is not bed for to examine on she can use benches and she them join together.

- (b) *I felt my mother's hand who was nervous as she was trying to calm me.

Viz: My mother who was nervous, tried to calm me with her hand

Ng-a-si-v-a *s-andla* *sa-Ø-make*
SM1ps-FAR.PST-OM7-feel-FV NPx7-hand POSS7-NPx1a-mother

lo-be-ka-tfuk-ile *a- se- tam-a*

REL1-PST-bec.nervous-ANT SM1.PART-CPL-try-FV

ku-ngi-thulis-a

INF-OM1ps-calm-FV

Literally: I long ago felt hand of mother who was nervous she already trying to me calm.

In Standard English 'joining them together' in (54) (a) should have been preceded by 'by' and positioned after the noun phrase /benches/ they modify. In Example (54) (b) the relative clause 'who was nervous' should have been placed after the noun phrase 'my mother' which it modifies. However, the siSwati translation, see (54) (b) the word order for 'mother's hand' is 'hand of mother' and here the relative clause '*lobekatfukile*' which means 'who was nervous' correctly applies to mother. Thus while I can say the modifiers are detached from the lexical items they modify in the students' writing in English, the structures are grammatical in siSwati. The dangling of modifiers in students' writings could thus be attributed to this feature of their L2 but when the same is translated to English, it renders ungrammatical structures.

The misplaced modifiers are referred to as dangling. Arua (1998, p. 145) argues that this feature also occurs with English L1 speakers. He identified it in Swazi Colloquial English (Arua, 1998) and also in Botswana English (Arua, 2004).

Dangling or misplaced modifiers are descriptive phrases that modify words and they are not correctly positioned in the sentences thus making the sentences illogical. The misplaced modifiers are placed far from the words they modify and thus render the sentences unclear or inaccurate. "One of the prescriptive rules of English is that modifiers should be placed near the objects they modify" (Arua, 1998, p. 145).

The following example in (55) below illustrates a dangling modifier.

- (55) *Although bright enough, I do not like the lights.

Viz.: Although the lights are bright enough, I do not like them.

6.4.6.6 NON-STANDARD PLACEMENT OF ADVERBS

An adverb in siSwati, as in English, describes a predicate, qualificative or another adverb with respect of time, place, or manner (Doke, 1954, Ziervogel & Mabuza, 1976). In English, adverbs are flexible and can be used at different places in a sentence structure; initially, medially or finally (Crystal, 2004, p.176; Altenberg & Vago, 2010, p. 103). Likewise in siSwati, they can appear sentence initially, medially and finally. According to the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, structures that are similar in two languages at a learner's disposal are easier to learn. However, this study observes that students use of adverbs seems neither consistent with their accepted definition nor with the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis. In some respondents' texts the adverbs were dangling thus rendering the structures given unclear and incorrect both in students' L1 and L2 as the examples in (56) below illustrate.

(56)

- (a) ***Stagerly** I led them to the till. (*stagerly seems to be associated with staggering in this sentence)

Viz: I staggered and lead them to the till.

Ng-a-yendz-a ng-a-ba-hol-el-a

SM1ps-FAR.PST-stagger-FV SM1ps-FAR.NARR-OM2-lead.to-FV

e-Ø-thil-ini

LOC-NPx9-till-LOC

Literally: I staggering I long ago them led to till.

- (b) *When I was about 6-7 years it was **fortunately** enough that my aunt got married to an Ivorian.

Viz: When I was 6 to 7 years old, fortunately my aunt got married to an Ivorian.

Uma ngi-ne-mi-nyaka le-ngu-Ø-6 ku-y-a

When SM1ps-ASS.NPx4-year REL4-COP-NPx1a-six INF-go.to-FV

ku-Ø-7 nge-nhlanhla imphela Ø-anti

LOC-NPx1a-seven INS-Ø-luck really NPx1a-aunt

wa-mi w-:-endz-a ku-m-Ivorian

POSS1-ABS.PRON1ps SM1-FAR.PST-marry-FV LOC-NPx1-Ivorian

Literally: When I have years six to seven luckily aunt my she long ago married to Ivorian.

While the students' adverbial ending, -ly, is grammatical, in (56) (a) and (b) the expression is erroneous. It appears that the incorrect placement of the adverbs is a consequence of non-acquisition of the English rule requiring that when one uses an adverb, one should ensure that it relates specifically to the word intended (Crystal, 2004, p. 68).

What I have observed in the analysis of students' texts is that most of the errors reveal that the students' L1 interferes with their production of grammatical Academic English sentence structures. However, the transfer alone is not all embracing and cannot entirely explain the students' failure to acquire competency or near native proficiency in Academic English. Instead there are other militating factors that are responsible for error. They include early educational environments which are not conducive to stimulating bilingualism, poor supply of text resources in both the L1 and the L2, the lack of the culture of reading, the remoteness of English mother-tongue contexts, peripheral normativity practices in the institutions and indeed the emergence and development of a new variety of English in Swaziland.

6.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter can be best concluded by looking at how the data has answered the study's research question. Data elicited answered the research question in that:

1. The interviews indicated that the majority of students did not engage with written literature in siSwati as children. Clearly this would put them at a disadvantage when learning Academic English because:
 - The culture of reading (for pleasure or information) was not initiated in the L1.
 - The ability to reflect on the written word and to engage with it was not encouraged in the L1.
2. The interviews indicated that while the students did study siSwati formally to some extent, this was not done in any detail after primary school. The interview responses suggested that students were not able to describe the grammar of their own languages and therefore could not describe the grammar of the L2 nor could they contrast it with the L1 which would help them anticipate (and correct) their errors.
3. It was clear from the responses to the questions relating to when they used English that students generally only used the L2 in academic situations. This meant that the structure, lexicon, semantics and syntax of the L1 were dominant and clearly affected the way the students expressed their thoughts and translated them into English.
4. In answering both the questionnaire and interview questions I detected many instances in which the L2 mistakes mirrored correct sentences in the L1.

The findings reported in this chapter have established that the taxonomy of errors in students' use of Academic English is widespread. With 40.7% of the respondents being final year

students who will be graduating and venturing into the world of work it appears that with linguistic forms such as the ones established by this research, the students' interlanguage systems have fossilized. When an interlanguage has fossilized, it has reached an end state of L2 acquisition which cannot be stretched any further; it is a period in a learner's learning curve that is beyond remediation (Selinker, 1972; Watermeyer, 1993).

While the findings of this study have also established that the taxonomy of errors are a consequence of factors such as the lack of sufficient comprehensible input, lack of authentic input, and the effects of acquisition in poor linguistic environments, L1 transfer appears to be the major precursor. As alluded to in Chapter 4, it appears that the problem is that siSwati as a language is not considered to have academic currency, and students are conscious of this but have nevertheless been raised using siSwati to operate certain cognitive functions which they are expected to transfer to English.

Many errors identified in the students' writings of Academic English reflect corresponding structures in their L1. As Arua (1998) argues, students tend to use deep rooted patterns of their L1 which run counter to those of the L2, and in so doing, impair their ability to impart meaning and to comprehend successfully.

Kamwangamalu (1994, 1996), Arua (1998) Kamwangamalu and Chisanga (1996) and de Koning (2009) refer to a new variety of English: Swazi Colloquial English and my study also points to a variety of English that is specific to Swaziland due to the transference of the L1 to the L2.

Nevertheless, while according to Aitchison (1981:15) "there can never be a moment of true standstill in language... [and] by nature it is a continuous process of development...", I believe that Academic English cannot have a Swaziland variety: it is a global discourse with universal rules and norms and students who cannot master it will struggle to compete in global markets.

The current study thus contends that since most of the errors evident in Swaziland students' use of Academic English are not peculiar to a new variety but occur as a result of transference from the L1, intervention strategies need to be put in place in order to allow students the opportunity to improve their language skills via scientifically proven methods and language teaching techniques. In the next chapter, I draw a general conclusion and discuss the implications of the findings. I also make recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I presented the results of my study and discussed them in relation to the theoretical underpinnings of the literature reviewed. The results have confirmed and refuted some of the theories and processes of L1 and L2 acquisition as well as some of my own assumptions.

This chapter is fourfold. I begin by drawing a conclusion based on the findings and look at what they imply about the way in which English is taught at tertiary institutions in Swaziland. I then make recommendations based on the findings, and suggest what areas could be examined for future research projects.

7.2 CONCLUSION ON THE FINDINGS

7.2.1 L1 TRANSFER

My findings indicate that the academic English of tertiary students in Swaziland does suffer from interference from their L1. This means that the students' L1 interferes with their ability to properly acquire Academic English: an analysis of their writings suggests that they tend to transfer grammatical, stylistic and semantic forms from their L1 to the L2.

While the students seem to have transferred the knowledge and skills of their L1 into the L2, an analysis of their texts nevertheless reveals that they have little or no meta-knowledge of their L1: this was shown in their inability to apply grammatical rules of their L1 that would have actually helped them to correct their L2 writing.

However, while siSwati L1 students sometimes do make errors of transference, these errors alone cannot explain the problems they have in expressing themselves in Academic English. This means that transfer cannot entirely explain the students' failure to acquire competency in academic English or near native proficiency in English. A number of errors that occurred could not be explained by transference from the respondents' L1. Other information collected in this study suggests that students' problems with expressing themselves in English include early educational environments which are not conducive to stimulating bilingualism, a poor supply of text resources in both the L1 and the L2, the lack of the culture of reading, the remoteness

of English mother-tongue contexts, peripheral normativity practices in the institutions and indeed the emergence and development of a new variety of English in Swaziland.

7.2.2 DIFFERENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE INFRASTRUCTURES

Students in tertiary institutions have learnt English in different English language infrastructures (Setati et al., 2002) most of which are English language-acquisition poor. As Mesthrie (1997) observed, the type of school where a learner receives instruction plays a significant role in accounting for linguistic variation. From grassroots level the environments where students have learnt Academic English are acquisition-poor, and Academic English is only ever encountered in the classroom. At home, and even at institutions of learning, students socialize with their families, peers and instructors in their L1s. Acquisition-poor environments inhibit language acquisition.

7.2.3 EXPOSURE TO WRITTEN LITERATURE

Research has revealed that Academic English advantages learners who have been socialized into reading and critical thinking practices from an early age (Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999): the majority of students who I interviewed for this study were raised in households where there was very limited exposure to written literature, either in the L1 or L2. The most common form of literature in their households was oral, and although listening to stories is important, it does not help students understand and engage with written texts which are critical for comprehending Academic English. The lack of storybooks at home could also explain why students struggle to improve their command of English: if they do not see reading as a natural pastime, they are more likely to engage in other activities (such as watching TV, or going on Facebook) where they might encounter English, but not of an academic variety.

7.2.4 INPUT

It appears that students in Swaziland's tertiary institutions do not receive enough input in the L2. Not only is there a paucity of L1 speakers of English in Swaziland's institutions of higher learning, students do not even receive $i + 1$ input in Academic English classes as, in the course of my interviews with them, they consistently maintained that they were taught the same material that they had encountered at high school.

Further, tertiary students not only receive the same kind of Academic English tuition that they encountered in high school, but are surrounded by siSwati input. Those who teach English are L2 speakers whose own command of the language is flawed, and as such they model behaviours

and legitimize linguistic habits that the student later discovers are unacceptable in Academic English. This situation suggests that:

Teacher training programmes need to take fully into account that previous reports have emphasized that primary school teachers in particular need to be sufficiently competent in languages to be able to teach confidently in both siSwati and English, whereas with many practicing teachers, including newly qualified teachers, this is clearly not the case. (MoET, 2013, p. 20)

These factors would contribute to L1 interference (the dearth of English speakers means the mistakes they make are rarely corrected nor questioned), and this ultimately retards the process of acquiring Academic English.

7.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The results of this study point to a number of concerns about the transfer of forms from the L1 to L2 and consequently the English used in tertiary institutions in Swaziland.

7.3.1 LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OF INSTRUCTORS

The problems identified in the writing of Academic English by tertiary students calls attention to the pedagogy of both the L1 and L2 in the country. Cross linguistic interference can be curbed in at grassroots level, by using the L1 as the medium of instruction for far longer than is currently the case in order to properly scaffold the learning and understanding of the L2. Once students have a thorough grasp of the metalinguistics of their L1, teachers will be able to apply contrastive and error analyses methods when teaching the L2. If the structures of the languages at the learners' disposal are compared, areas of difficulty the students are likely to encounter might be identified. Teaching methods and materials could be tailored to address those areas of difficulty that arise directly from the influence of the L1. New pedagogies that emerge as a result of deliberately contrasting and explaining the grammars of the L1 and the L2 could be used to further scientific research in the field of SLA. As Pennycook (1998, p.131) observes:

Theories and practices were not developed in Britain and then exported to the Empire but rather...the Empire became the central testing site for the development of ELT, from where theories and practices were then imported to Britain.

As such, tertiary institutions, in collaboration with academic English language instructors in institutions of learning, should develop curricula and their own pedagogical theories and practices and rely in large part on their own creativity and resources for the benefit of the Swazi learner in the era of globalization.

Many students indicated that although they were taught in the medium of English at high school their teachers were L2 speakers whose own command of the language was flawed. According to Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008) educated L2 speakers become the embodiment of the norm in a learning institution. In Swaziland, there is a paucity of indigenous elites with a good command of Academic English who would have meaningful interactions with L1 speakers of siSwati. This implies that the number of local Swazis with a native like mastery of English is dwindling and becoming smaller than those learning it. As some of the participants are in their final years, they themselves will soon be instructing learners in the kinds of flawed academic English they are currently using. It is therefore imperative that instructors (individually and through institutional support) as Kapur (2013, p. 29) puts it:

Augment [their] professional skills and knowledge beyond the training received at the onset of their career' through in-service and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes.

According to Kapur (2013, p.29) Continuing Professional Development programmes should be considered as a process by which instructors aim at developing their knowledge and changing their attitudes, skills, disposition and practice. It comprises both the transfer of knowledge from experts and experiential learning.

In my interview sessions with lecturers, when I asked about in-service training and conferences, the majority admitted that they did not attend these forums frequently. This is unfortunate since these are platforms that hone their skills as role models for learners in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing English and are also opportunities for them to discuss their experiences and learn from others. This sharing of experiences would boost their confidence and impact positively on the teaching/learning process (Kapur 2013, p.30). Institutional support is critical in demonstrating commitment to the continuing developments of its employees (Kapur, 2013, p.32).

While I am very conscious of the financial constraints Continuing Professional Development programmes may pose to instructors who may want to develop themselves, I believe that another way could be the use of ICT. According to Kapur, (2013, p.31) ICT can ensure that instructors transcend institutional and geographical barriers to interact with peers and experts. Instructors can therefore join online discussion forums, archives and blogs. These are rich sources of information and best practices.

7.3.2 LECTURERS' AND STUDENTS' REASONS FOR STUDENTS' LACK OF PROFICIENCY IN ACADEMIC ENGLISH

In the my interviews with them, I discovered that instructors placed the blame for low level of Academic English literacy on students' lack of interest in, and enthusiasm for, programmes such as Academic Communication Skills. Students themselves expressed ambivalent attitudes to programmes such as Academic Communication Skills arguing that most of the content in this course had already been covered at high school level.

It is therefore clear, on the one hand, that lecturers do not want to take responsibility for their students' problems with Academic English and believe their students are not motivated to improve their writing skills. On the other hand, in conversations with students, I learnt that English lecturers and teachers do not incentivize or inspire their students, nor do they act as role models who present Academic English as an attainable and useful proficiency.

7.3.3 EVALUATION STANDARDS

The notion of what is "correct" and what is not correct English in Swaziland's higher institutions of learning needs to be investigated. I was personally surprised by my thesis supervisor approving sentences that I had deemed incorrect. If Swaziland's students are doing badly in English, is it because we teachers are, as Qiang and Wolff (2003, p. 32) put it, "dissecting the grammatical rules, analyzing English writing ... memorizing vocabulary ..." and assessing our students according to outdated notions of what is and what is not, correct English.

In addition, if Swaziland's academic English is considered unacceptable, we teachers need to research whether it is the English itself, or their ability to express academic ideas logically, that is at fault. This would require a whole different research project, but it is my recommendation in this study that educationalists in Swaziland consider both issues of transference from the L1 as well as the paucity of cognitive skills, as factors that seriously impact on students' ability to submit work that is rigorously academic, logical and structured.

Further, both students and instructors admitted to engaging in linguistic habits that did not aid acquisition, with one student saying it was 'the way of life today'. This suggests that indulging in non-normative discourse is becoming part of the linguistic culture of the youth, and it can then be argued, that if an entity like language is a culture, its users may as well not be prohibited from using it. Chick and Wade (1997, p. 281) arguing for the standardization of BSAE as a way of facilitating English acquisition, observe that students:

Might feel that a restandardised English expresses their identity and serves their communicative needs better than StdSAE. This greater sense of ownership, in turn, would tend to facilitate the acquisition of English by a wide range of South African learners.

The real challenge arises when BSAE is not considered as an acceptable variety for academic communication. The tension therefore exists between English acquisition and the acquisition of Academic English. The language acquisition theories discussed in this thesis attest to the fact that if learners are able to identify with the target language, the learning process is promoted (Chick & Wade, 1997, p. 281) but they do not offer solutions for situations that arise when the target language is in a variety that is not considered acceptable for academic discourse. Thus we have the situation in Swaziland today where the employment of deviant forms in the writings of tertiary students, while reflecting BSAE, are still not considered permissible by language instructors in institutions of higher learning. The common syntactic, semantic, lexical and pragmatic features evident in the writing of first, final-years can be regarded as having fossilized, reflecting an independent new variety of English: Swazi English. According to Mesthrie (1997, p. 119):

From studies of English elsewhere, however, we are also aware that even where the educational system is reasonably sound and on the side of the pupil ... an indigenized (or nativised) form of English is likely to develop. While such a variety may not have a fully acknowledged status in its own country of origin, it is more or less acceptable even in informal educational contexts.”

From a sociolinguistic standpoint, in this study I concede that while the deviant normativity in language (Blommaert, 2005 and 2010) used in peripheral societies drifts away from the norms of the centre, students and academics alike are nativizing English. They are making it culturally and referentially appropriate in the Swazi context. This appears to confirm the variety (Swazi Colloquial English) that was established by Kamwangamalu and Chisanga (1996), Kamwangamalu and Moyo (2003) and De Koning (2009) in their small scale studies of Swazi English.

I am wary of the problem this may pose, since the curricula followed in the country still pay allegiance to British norms. It should be noted, however, that the same curricula have created an elite closure (Tollefson, 1991) and moves should be made to employ the peripheral normativity as an instrument of inclusion and creativity at the local level (Blommaert, 2005, p. 396). In the elite closure only a few stand to benefit from the political, social and economic deliberations of their country. If Swaziland is to obtain 1st world status by 2022, I argue that

language planners need not ignore the emerging variety of English: Swazi English. As Li (1996, p. 127), says, it will:

...serve to stretch the imagination of educators in [Swaziland and abroad] to understand the cultural bias in the standards many of them so rigorously maintain[and]... acquaint themselves with students' native cultures [before they] make judicious judgments about the sources of students' problems.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study have identified some of the cross-linguistic effects of siSwati as the L1 on the acquisition of Academic English among students in higher education in Swaziland. On the basis of these effects, the study can suggest improving the teaching and learning of Academic English in Swaziland in the following ways:

- Firstly, in view of the central role an L1 plays in the acquisition of an L2, the government of Swaziland needs to make parents aware of this role and enforce the teaching and learning of siSwati in schools especially in the formative years. SiSwati L1 students should be well grounded in the L1 in order to positively transfer an intellectual knowledge of the rules of grammar to the L2. Cummins (1984, 2000) postulated that skills a learner acquires in one language help boost skills in the other and the interdependency is mutual. If siSwati is well established in the cognition of tertiary learners from grassroots level, it would be easier for them to acquire Academic English as an L2.
- Secondly, at a sociocultural level, the effect of the demand for English medium instruction must be scrutinized. There is need for policy that will dislodge in the parents' and learners' minds what Chinua Achebe called "the fatalistic logic of the unassailable position of English" (Achebe, 1975.p.xiv).
- Thirdly, to rectify the shortcomings in the current development programmes (English language courses and academic assistance programmes such as Academic Communication Skills have failed to solve the problems of proficiency), in this study I recommend that higher education institutions benchmark and further provide extended curricula programmes for students who obtain marks below a set threshold. These programmes need to take into account contemporary research and best practices by universities across the globe.

- Fourthly, I recommend a Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis of siSwati and English as part of the groundwork that needs to be done to improve the language situation in Swaziland. This approach will entail carrying out a comparison of the learners' data with that of native speakers of English. This will make it possible to uncover the patterns of use distinguishing learners' data from native speakers'. The contrast will evidence items that are most likely to be encountered by L2 learners and which may deserve more investment of time in instruction (Kennedy, 1998, p. 281). It will also help warn learners of typical errors and help instructors design material to sensitize them to the most common errors attested in English by Swazis. This, in turn, will help the instructors to facilitate the task of acquisition/learning by recognizing the learners' L1 as being relevant to the L2 process and an understanding on how to handle areas of difficulty for learners in acquiring features of Academic English. L1 SiSwati-speakers of Academic English will benefit from a detailed comparison of Academic English and siSwati systems because, from the findings of this research, it is evident that learners are already comparing them and drawing on perceived similarities. Therefore, "the hour of a learner corpus is an idea whose hour has come" Kennedy (1998, p. 281) in the education system of Swaziland, particularly in the teaching and learning of academic English. As Corder (1967, p. 169) rightly argues:

The learner's errors will, if systematically studied, tell us something....We may begin to be more critical of our cherished notions. We may be able to allow the learner's innate strategies to dictate our practice and determine our syllabus; we may learn to adapt ourselves to his needs rather than impose upon him our preconceptions of how he ought to learn, what he ought to learn and how he ought to learn it.

- Finally, linguistic diversity indicates that mobility and super-diversity as a result of globalization is affecting every speech community. Systematic errors, considered wrong forms according to the standards of the inner circle, are becoming acceptable and are gaining popularity today in the World Englishes (WEs) and English as a Second Language (ESL) situation. Language educators in Swaziland need to keep abreast of contemporary developments in language teaching, and to include and discuss non-standard varieties and not focus too rigidly on outdated notions of what constitutes a grammatically correct sentence. However, while proponents of New Englishes encourage countries such as Swaziland to celebrate diversity and embrace their own speech forms, there should nevertheless be an awareness that Academic English discourse still requires certain standards that cannot be ignored.

7.5 FUTURE STUDIES

- Among the issues that this study addressed, but has not been able to draw conclusive remarks on, is the nature of the students' L1. Future studies can perhaps focus on the nature of tertiary students' L1 and how much it deviates from what is considered standard siSwati and what the impact of this might be on the acquisition of Academic English.
- Studies may be taken up with control groups to establish the nature of input from preschool in both English and siSwati and the influence this input has on the acquisition of Academic English in the education system of Swaziland.

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APPENDIX A: STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge by ticking the relevant block or writing down your answer in the spaces provided.

SECTION A - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

(Although the researcher is aware of the sensitivity of the biographical section of a questionnaire, the information you will provide will allow her to compare groups of respondents. Again you are assured of your responses' anonymity in this regard.

1. Gender

Male	Female
------	--------
2. Age (in complete years)

--
3. Educational level

First year	Final year
------------	------------
4. Geographical region of origin

Shiselweni	Manzini	Lubombo	Hhohho
------------	---------	---------	--------
5. How would you define the area where you come from.

Rural	Urban
-------	-------
6. Diploma or degree for which you are studying and your majors.(e.g STD English/Geography)

SECTION B (This section explores your habits and experiences with regard to the use of your vernacular)

7. Is your first language Swati?

Yes	No
-----	----

 If your answer to 5 is No you are requested not to participate in this survey. If it is yes, please proceed to question 9.
8. At what age did you start to learn your first language?
 At home.....
 At school.....
9. As you grew up, did you encounter literature in Swati at home?

Yes	No
-----	----
10. If YES, in what form was this Swati literature?

11. How would you rate your Swati proficiency?

Elementary	Intermediate	Advanced	Native speaker* (can speak, understand, read and write Swati at a very high level)
------------	--------------	----------	--
12. How did you learn your first language up to the proficiency level you are at ?
 Only at home
 Mainly through formal classroom instruction.....
 Mainly through interacting with people.....
 A mixture of both.....
 Other (specify).....
13. At what age were you first exposed to first language learning in terms of speaking, reading, writing and how many years have you spent on learning this language?

Language	speaking	reading	writing	Number of years learning 1 st lang.
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SECTION C (This section explores your habits and experiences with regard to the use of academic English.

14. What is your second language?.....
If English is **not** your second language, you are requested not to participate in this survey.
15. At what age did you start to learn your second language?
At home.....
At school.....
16. How would you rate your proficiency in your second language?

Elementary	Intermediate	Advanced	Near native speaker
------------	--------------	----------	---------------------
17. How did you learn your second language up to the proficiency level you are at?
Mainly through formal classroom instruction.....
Mainly through interacting with people.....
A mixture of both.....
Other (specify).....
18. As you grew up, did you encounter literature in English at home?

Yes	No
-----	----
19. If YES in what form was this English literature?.....
.....
.....
20. Explain how much exposure to English you had outside the classroom as you grew up.....
.....
.....
21. Did you study any other languages other than English at school?

Yes	No
-----	----
22. If you answered yes to 12, indicate what the languages were.....
.....
23. Using the scale 1-5, rate your ability on the following aspects in each of the languages you know. 1. Poor, 2. Fair, 3. Functional, 4. Good, 5. Very good.
- | Language | Reading Proficiency | Writing Proficiency | Speaking Fluency | Comprehension Ability |
|----------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
24. At what age were you first exposed to second language learning in terms of speaking, reading, writing and how many years have you spent on learning this language?
- | Language | speaking | reading | writing | Number of years learning |
|----------|----------|---------|---------|--------------------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

SECTION D - GENERAL

25. Languages spoken

Language (s) you speak to your parents/care taker	
Language (s) your parents/care takers can speak fluently	
Language (s) your parents/carer takers speak to each other	

26. Write down the name of the language in which you received instruction in school, for each schooling level.

Pre-primary school.....
 Primary school.....
 Secondary/high school.....
 College/university.....

27. How frequently do you speak in Swati on campus with friends?

Sometimes	Often	Most of the time	All the time
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28. How frequently do you speak in English on campus with friends?

Sometimes	Often	Most of the time	All the time
-----------	-------	------------------	--------------

29. How often do you speak in Swati with lecturers?

Sometimes	Often	Most of the time	All the time
-----------	-------	------------------	--------------

30. How often do you speak in English with lecturers?

Sometimes	Often	Most of the time	All the time
-----------	-------	------------------	--------------

31. When you are speaking, do you ever mix words or sentences from two or more languages you know?

Yes	No
-----	----

32. Explain the reasons why you ever mix words or sentences in the languages you speak.....

33. Rate the frequency of mixing in normal conversation with the following people on a scale from 1 (very rare), 2 (rare) 3 (often) 4(mixing most of the time to 5 (mixing all the time)

Relationship	Frequency of Mixing
Family members/spouse	
Friends/classmates	
Lecturers	

34. Among the languages you know, which language would you prefer to use in these situations?

At home.....
 At school.....
 In writing.....
 At a party.....
 In general.....

35. Please indicate the score/symbol you received in each of the languages you know in any **one** of the following school leaving examinations.

	English Language	SiSwati	Other
GCE O'Level			
HIGCSE			
IGCSE			
SGCSE			

Thank you very much for your participation in this survey.

APPENDIX B: STUDENTS' INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

First year	Final year
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A). First language Acquisition

1. Can you tell me your story on how you learnt your mother tongue.
2. Would you say that the Swati that you speak is standard? Why?
3. At school level were you taught Swati linguistic features such as nouns, plurals of nouns, verbs, tenses, aspect, moods etc ?
4. How do we form the progressive aspect of a verb in Swati?
5. Were you taught idiomatic expression in Swati?
6. What is the equivalence of the proverb once bitten, twice shy in Swati?
7. Can you read and write in Swati?
8. If your answer is no to 9, why is it that you cannot read?
9. If your answer to 9 is yes, how did you learn reading in Swati?
10. Do you think that the way you speak/write/read Swati has any influence on the way you speak/write/read in English? How? Please elaborate.
11. Can you recount an incident where you felt hugely embarrassed in class/examination room?

B) Second Language Learning

12. How much speaking and reading of English went on in your home as you grew up?
13. Were there English books in the house or did you go to the library to take out English books.
14. What is your understanding of academic English?
15. Can you tell me how you learnt Academic English at high school? What was it like to learn academic English at school? Can you take me through an academic English language class?
16. Do you think you are taught academic English at tertiary institution? If so, how?
17. What is it like to learn English at a tertiary institution? Can you enact a simple scenario in an English class?
18. Have you ever had some frustrations on learning academic English? Can you explain your answer?
19. How were your needs, if there were any, of academic English met in your classroom?
20. How do you maintain or increase your academic English proficiency?
21. Are there any instances where you think in your first language and translate your thoughts to the second language? Can you explain those instances?
22. Are there any instances where you feel ashamed that you cannot find the right words to say something? Can you elaborate or give an example.
23. Do you think your knowledge of Swati has affected or aided your learning of academic English? How? Can you elaborate or give examples.
24. Do you have any comments or questions?

APPENDIX C: LECTURERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge by ticking the relevant block or writing down your answers in the spaces provided.

SECTION A – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

(Although the researcher is aware that the biographical section of the questionnaire is sensitive, the information you will provide will allow her to compare groups of respondents. Again you are assured of your responses' anonymity in this regard.)

1. Gender

Male	Female
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2. Age

30 -35	36-40	41-50	51+
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3. Educational level

BA	MASTERS	DOCTORAL (and +)
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4. What is your native language?.....

5. What is your second language?.....

6. Using the scale below, rate your students' ability on the following aspects in academic English.
1.. Poor, 2. Fair, 3. Functional, 4. Good, 5. Very good.

Reading Proficiency	Writing Proficiency	Speaking Fluency	Comprehension Ability

7. Rate the frequency of the students using English or mixing codes in normal conversation with the following people on a scale from 1 (mixing very rare) to 5 (mixing frequently)

Relationship	Frequency of using English	Frequency of mixing codes
You		
Friends / classmates		
Lecturers in general		

8. When you are speaking, do you ever mix words or sentences from two or more languages you know?

Yes	No
-----	----

9. If you ever mix words or sentences from two or more languages you know, what prompts you into doing so?.....

10. How much of the time that you speak in class do you use English?

100% of the time	80 – 99%	79 -51%	50% or less
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11. If you happen to use vernacular, what prompts you into that?

.....

.....

12. Do you attend any conferences or courses on teaching English?

YES	NO
-----	----

13. If yes, which ones and how frequent do you attend them?.....

.....

.....

14. Do you subscribe to any academic journals on Teaching English.

Yes	No
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15. If Yes, which one and how frequently?.....

SECTION B

16. What in your opinion is the level of proficiency in academic English of students in this institution of learning?

Elementary	Intermediate	Advanced	Near native speaker
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17. Do you think there is a need for a specific proficiency target in English that each student must achieve at the end of his programme of study? Can you explain why or why not?

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.....

.....

.....

18. What percentage of final year students are likely to have achieved high proficiency in academic English at graduation as a result of the courses you teach?

.....

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.....

.....

19. Do you think there is enough input in academic English in terms of speaking, reading, writing and comprehension in this institution so that students develop a sense of what is right usage? Please elaborate on your response.

.....

.....

.....

.....

20. How do you meet the needs of your students in academic English in your classroom?

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.....

.....

21. What activities (if there are any) in your class force students to speak, write and read in academic English?

.....

.....

22. What is your belief on the best way for students to learn academic English?

.....

.....

.....

.....

23. What intervention strategies can tertiary institutions put in place in order to help students improve their proficiencies in academic English?

.....

.....

.....

24. If you have any comments to make or additional information you would like to share with the researcher please feel free to jot it down in the space below.

